A STUDY OF ADOPTION REUNIONS AND SELF CONCEPT IN ADULT ADOPTEES

by

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Abstract

The primary aim of this study was to examine whether adoptees who had experienced a reunion with a birth relative would score more positively on a measure of self-concept than adoptees who had not experienced a reunion. The Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (Roid & Fitts, 1988) was administered by mailout to adoptees who were members of the Forget Me Not Family Society or the TRIAD Society. A total of 159 adult adoptees participated in the study. Contrary to expectation, the results of the study indicated no differences on self-concept scores between reunited and searching adoptees. In addition, the mean scores of adoptees in this study were within the normal limits reported for the general population. The findings seem to indicate that as a group, adoptees do not differ in self-concept from the general population and also that reunions do not influence the self-concept of adult adoptees.
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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Background

History of Adoption

Adoption has existed throughout history in one form or another, in various societies in the world. The oldest written adoption law dates back to 2800 B.C. with the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi (Cole & Donley, 1990). This first adoption law addressed some of the same issues that people dealing with adoption struggle with today, such as, the compatibility between adoptees and adoptive families, the trauma of separation of adoptees from birth parents, and the search and reunion of adoptees with birth families. Stories of adoption, such as that of Moses's adoption by the Pharoah's daughter, and of Oedipus's adoption by the King and Queen of Corinth, pervade historical writings.

Although adoption has existed, in fact and in myth, since early times, its practice and purpose have varied widely throughout time, and from culture to culture. Kreager's (1980) study of adoption practices in the societies of Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America points out the diversity with which adoption is viewed and practiced throughout the world. Unlike the practice of adoption in western culture, the customs of adoption in most other societies are practiced as a part of everyday extended family or community relations, and not only as a response to crisis situations such as orphaning, poverty, and family break-up. In most societies, adoption does not entail a radical separation of a child from his or her birth parents. Rather, alternative forms of adoption are practiced as complementary to family relations and childrearing (Kreager, 1980).

In some cultures, such as those of West Africa, West Indies, Malaysia, Islands of the Pacific, Southern Europe, and Latin America, adoption takes on the form of "co-
parenting" and/or "fostering" by extended family members or kin. Adoption or fostering of children by strangers is very uncommon and, in some areas, even unthinkable. The rearing of children in these areas is a responsibility of the extended family (Kreager, 1980).

Adoption happens somewhat more formally in parts of Asia; however, it is almost always by kin. In Chinese communities, adoption is typically a response to the absence of male heirs and usually involves a full transfer of rights over a child (Kreager, 1980). That is, one family member may relinquish his or her child to a sibling who is childless, thus providing the sibling with an heir.

In most societies, such as the ones mentioned above, children who are adopted know who their birth parents are. This, however, has not been the customary practice of western adoptions, where children are sometimes adopted within their extended birth families, but are also commonly adopted by families with whom they have no biological connection.

History of Adoption in North America

Adoptions began in North America in the mid-1800's. In the United States, adoptions were first practiced either informally or by indenturing the child to the new parents. However, with the beginning of the industrial revolution and boom in population, indenturing of children as an employment practice was discontinued and adoption laws were created (Cole & Donley, 1990).

The first adoption law in the U.S. was passed in Massachusetts in 1851 (Sachdev, 1989b) and, in Canada, New Brunswick formed the first adoption legislation in 1873 (Kirk & McDaniel, 1984). These Canadian and American laws were similar in that they provided for legal inquiry into and control over adoptions. They also maintained that the purpose of the adoption law was to promote the welfare of the child (Cole & Donley, 1990).
During the 1800's, adoption began to be used as a solution for providing homes for homeless children. As reported by Cole and Donley (1990), children were moved from the cities in the eastern U.S. to farming communities in the western states. This transportation of children met with controversy. Some saw the adoption of homeless children into farming families as far better than rearing them in institutions. Others were opposed to the practice of moving children from eastern cities to western states to work on farms. Despite this opposition, by 1859 approximately 4000 to 5000 children had been placed in the west and 20 000 to 24 000 had been sent to other parts of the U.S. (Cole and Donley, 1990).

The children who were adopted were typically between the ages of 2 and 14. Infants were seldom adopted for several reasons. First, many states passed laws between 1900 and 1930 prohibiting separating a child from his or her mother during a 6-month nursing period. Second, the death rate of infants in foundling homes and institutions was very high. Third, fear of the child's heredity was prevalent because most infants were from poor immigrant families against whom there was much prejudice. And fourth, many professionals serving single mothers did not believe in adoption, because they did not think it was good for the mother or for the infant (Cole & Donley, 1990).

The practice of adoption continued and increased significantly in North America after World War I and World War II. Adoption agencies developed to combat "bootlegging" or "black market" adoptions by private brokers and to regulate the practice of adoption. Adoption agencies continue to exist in the U.S. and Canada although their policies and practices vary. The practice of adoption is regulated by individual states in the U.S. and individual provinces in Canada. British Columbia is the only province in Canada where adoptions arranged by private agents are unregulated, while those arranged by the Ministry of Social Services are regulated (Report to the Minister of Social Services, 1994).
In Canada, adoption legislation is a provincial matter; therefore, the regulations vary from province to province. However, it has been common practice in all provinces for children to be adopted outside of their extended birth family, to a family whose identity is kept from the birth family. Although "private" adoptions have existed between birth and adoptive families who know one another and maintain contact in some instances, the majority of adoptions have occurred between strangers. In most instances, the birth mother signs consent forms relinquishing her parental rights within days of the child's birth. The parental rights are then transferred to the adoptive parents, who have been selected from those who have applied to adopt a child, and the child becomes "as if born to" them (B.C. Adoption Act, 1957, 1989). In most cases, the birth mother and adoptive parents never meet and their identities are kept from the other. Legislation dictates that the child's original birth registration, including his or her birth name and the names of his or her birth parents, is sealed, and he or she is given a name chosen by the adoptive parents.

While this form of adoption is popular in various parts of North America, it was entirely foreign to the aboriginal people of Canada until the 1950's. A form of adoption had long been practiced by the Inuit peoples of North America as a means of mutual aid among isolated bands living in harsh climates but their practice of adoption was very different than the western concept of adoption (Kirk & McDaniel, 1981). Nevertheless, in 1951, Section 88 was added to the Indian Act, extending provincial laws to First Nations people. Provincial child protection laws were imposed on aboriginal people without recognition or respect for their cultural and historical differences. In the 1960's, large numbers of aboriginal children were apprehended on perhaps wrongful grounds. Many of these children were subsequently adopted by non-aboriginal families without their birthparents' consent (Report to the Minister of Social Services, 1994).
In the 1970's, 40% of all adopted children in B.C. were aboriginal, although aboriginal people made up only 4% of the general population, and in the 1980's, 30% of all adopted children were aboriginal, while only 5% of the B.C. population was aboriginal (Report to the Minister of Social Services, 1994). In 1992, a moratorium was placed in B.C., on the adoption of First Nations children to non-aboriginal homes. Moratoriums also exist in other provinces of Canada.

The experiences of First Nations adoptees have yet to be documented in any formal writing. However, their experiences of search and reunion may be distinct from others' experiences. Most of the First Nations people were adopted into caucasian families and predominantly white communities and grew up without any connection to their First Nations heritage. For many, a reunion with their birth parents may be their first experience of the First Nations culture and traditions. However, because many aboriginal adoptees were not adopted with their birth parents' consent, their birth relatives and Native community often considers the reunion to be "a home coming." For many adult adoptees, understanding the diversity between this new found culture and the "white" culture they grew up with and integrating the two into their sense of self becomes a difficult and overwhelming task (Lizabeth Hall, 1996).

History of Adoption Reunions in British Columbia

The current B.C. Adoption Act was originally drafted in 1920 (Report to the Minister of Social Services, 1994), and there have been over 50,000 adoptions in B.C. since then. In most of these adoptions, adoption records and original birth registrations have been kept sealed. Over the years, many adoptees in B.C., Canada, and the rest of the world have attempted to initiate searches for their birth families whose identities were hidden. Searching has been a difficult, if not impossible, task for most adoptees. In many Western countries, including Canada, an adoptee's original birth registration and adoption file with information containing his or her birth name, and the names of
his or her birth parents, is sealed without access. Therefore, the person searching
often has no information, or at best very little information, on which to begin the search.

Adoptees and other members of the adoption circle around the world have
lobbied to change legislation which maintains this practice. Some countries have
effectively revised their legislation so that adoptees can have limited access to their
records. For example, in England, an adopted person may request and obtain a copy
of his or her original birth registration, on or after his or her 18th birthday (Registrar

Although adoption practices have been under public scrutiny since their
inception, the movement towards open records in adoption gained force and attention
in the 1970's. As a response to pressure from interested groups, legislators throughout
Canada have been examining the effects of reunions since at least the mid 1970's. In
1975, the Berger Commission was established in British Columbia to examine the
legislation on adoption. At the time, the issue of open adoption files was being
examined throughout Canada and the United States, with more and more adoptees
insisting that they had a constitutionally based civil right to access to their sealed birth
records.

The B.C. legislators examined the possibility of creating a registry where
adoptees and birth parents could apply to be reunited. Stephenson (1975), of the
University of British Columbia, was one of the first to discuss the controversy
surrounding open records and reunions. She examined the limited literature on the
experiences of birth parents, adoptive parents, and adoptees. The Berger Commission
did the same and decided against open records and an adoption reunion registry in
B.C. concluding that it would not be beneficial to the parties involved (Berger, 1975). In
the United States, too, all but 4 states held strict policies on permanent sealed birth
records at that time (Sorosky, Baran & Pannor, 1976).
Attention to adoption and open records continued to grow and, in 1988, the B.C. legislation was again reviewed. This time, the legislators decided to form what they called a passive registry. This meant that birth parents and adoptees could apply and place their names on a registry. If and when both parties registered, they would be matched and reunited. This registry resulted in few reunions. It is likely that one of the reasons for this is because advertisement of the adoption reunion services has been a continued difficulty. The Report to the Minister of Social Services (1994) reports that a large number of those who addressed their Review Panel had no knowledge of the Registry and the services it offered.

Adoptees and concerned groups continued to lobby for open records throughout the 1980's and into the 1990's; many adoptees believe that they have a right to the information in their adoption files (Report to the Minister of Social Services, 1994; Sachdev, 1989b; Lifton, 1979). In 1991, the Adoption Act of B.C. was changed to allow for an active registry. Through this registry, where birth parents and adoptees can apply for a facilitated active search and reunion.

Other provinces and territories in Canada have also amended their legislation to address the issue of open records and reunions with birth families. Because adoption legislation is enacted independently by provincial governments, each province has different policies and practices regarding adoption reunions. For instance, some provinces have a passive registry only, which requires that both interested parties apply before a reunion can take place. Other provinces have semi-active registries which conduct searches on behalf of adoptees only. That is, birth parents and other birth relatives cannot apply for contact with the adoptee. The resources and waiting lists for these services also vary throughout the country.

In addition to the government-funded provincial registries, there are also non-profit, volunteer organizations which exist throughout the country to support members of the adoption circle. The Forget Me Not Family Society and the TRIAD Society for
Truth in Adoption are two such local organizations. These organizations have been active in reforming the adoption laws in Canada and in supporting adoptees, birth parents, and adoptive parents through search and reunions. The TRIAD Society is a national organization which provides a computerized registry, assistance with search and reunion, counselling services and support groups, and awareness of adoption through conferences and involvement with various committees and government departments. The Forget Me Not Family Society is a local non-profit organization which is also committed to openness in adoption. Through volunteers, they provide information, support groups, conferences, and advocacy for all members of the adoption circle. Both the TRIAD and Forget Me Not Societies have worked hard to lobby governments for changes to the adoption legislation in B.C. and the rest of Canada.

Provincial legislation on adoption, and specifically on adoption disclosure, is under scrutiny in most areas of Canada. Currently, the Adoption Act of B.C. is being revised. In January, 1993, the Ministry of Social Services established the Adoption Legislation Review Committee to travel the province and hear submissions from interested parties regarding all aspects of the Adoption Act. In July, 1994, the committee submitted their report and 103 recommendations to the Honourable Joy McPhail, Minister of Social Services. The new adoption act was then written considering these recommendations. It is expected that the new act, Bill 51, will be coming into effect in the fall of this year.

Among the changes to the Act, sections 58 to 74 deal specifically with openness of adoption information and access to adoption records. The Act allow birth parents and adopted persons over the age of 19 to receive the adoptee's original birth registration and adoption order, if no disclosure veto has been filed by the other party. Birth parents and adoptees can also apply for assistance in contacting each other. In addition, if it is in the best interest of the child, adoptive parents of an aboriginal child
under the age of 19 may also receive information on the child's First Nations band and community. Likewise, a birth parent of an aboriginal child may also receive identifying information and contact the child, with the adoptive parents' consent.

These changes, and the changes which allow for reunions between birth parents and adoptees, have undoubtedly been based on the premise that reunions are a good thing, that they benefit all members of the adoption triad. Much of the literature on adoption disclosure argues that reunions benefit all members of the adoption circle. For example, for birth parents, authors argue that reunions allow them to know what has happened to the child they relinquished, to know the child was well and to find inner peace or some kind of healing (Silverman, Campbell, Patti & Style, 1988); for adoptive parents, it is suggested that reunions release them from the secrecy (Berry, 1991), and actually strengthen their relationship with their child (Sachdev, 1992; Baran, Pannor, Sorosky, 1974; Rosensweig-Smith, 1988); and for adoptees, that reunions increase their sense of self-concept and identity (Baran, Pannor & Sorosky, 1974; Sachdev, 1992, 1989a; Aumend & Barrett, 1984; Depp, 1982; Dukette, 1984; Campbell, Silverman & Patti, 1991; Anderson, 1988, 1989; Gladstone & Westhues, 1992; Berry, 1991). The strength of these conclusions is open to debate, however, as discussed below.

The Problem

From the list of studies cited above, it is apparent that it is commonly believed that reunions benefit adoptees in forming a sense of identity and increasing their self concept. However, there is very little sound research that verifies this. Because of the secrecy surrounding adoption, it has typically been difficult for researchers to obtain participants who have experienced reunion. Therefore, there is very little research that reports the effects of reunion on identity. Furthermore, researchers have been limited
to studies with small sample sizes or restricted to samples from clinical populations. This has made generalizing to the general adoptive population very difficult.

Nevertheless, almost all writing on reunions, open files, and open adoption supports these practices because there is a commonly held belief that they will enhance the adoptees sense of identity or self-concept. Many studies have reported that adoptees enter into a search and reunion believing that it will resolve identity crises, or heighten their self concept (Triseliotis, 1973). Other studies claim that adoptees report a better sense of identity after reunion (Sorosky, Baran & Pannor, 1975; Depp, 1982). In fact, changes to the B.C. Adoption Act, and the practices of those who work in the area of adoptions and reunions, appear to be based on this premise. The Report to the Minister of Social Services (1994) suggests that "sealing adoption records meant that a child's 'identity was stolen' ..." (p.26). Furthermore, the Adoption Legislation Review Committee suggests that "this kind of information can be critical to some adoptees at adolescence who may have trouble forming identities when they lack information about their origins ... Access to records ... could help them deal with feelings of rejection and form a complete picture of themselves" (p.29).

In spite of these claims, however, this premise has not been clearly tested and examined; it is treated as fact without being clearly validated. For example, Anderson (1988) maintains that it is ridiculous to even ask about the motivations for search; that the reasons for "a compelling need to know one's own story" are obvious. He may be correct. However, not all adoptees have the same intensity of desire for information. Sachdev (1989b) found that while almost all adoptees in his study had some curiosity about their birth parents, the desire to know ranged from fleeting interest or curiosity in some adoptees to compulsive yearning in others. Some adoptees are only interested in learning about their genealogical background, while others are not content until they have met their birth parents (Sachdev, 1989).
This researcher's experience, working with adoptees who have initiated a search and those who have not, has been that most adoptees admit to some interest in knowing about their birth parents and/or genealogical history, however, there are those adoptees that state they are not interested. Even amongst those that are interested, there are variations in how the process of acquiring and assimilating the information is handled. The amount of interest and the timing for when they choose to acquire this information varies with each adoptee. For example, some adoptees are interested in only very limited and specific information which is non-identifying of their birth parents, while others desire to meet and develop a relationship with their birth relatives. The rate and timing for acquiring this information is also very individual. That is, not all adoptees are ready for this information at the same stage of life. For instance, more than one adoptee has informed me that it wasn't until they were in their forties that they felt ready for a reunion. Others submit their applications for search as soon as they turn nineteen, which is the minimum age in B.C. Regarding the rate for acquiring the information, some adoptees and birth parents meet immediately upon receiving each others non-identifying information and tell each other everything about themselves during their first contact. Others take a year or more to meet and share only little bits of information at a time, because any more would be overwhelming. It seems obvious that, as individual's vary, so too will their approach to acquiring and assimilating this personal information.

**Research Question**

The question for this research, then, did not focus on the motivations or mode for acquiring birth history information. Rather, the purpose of this research was to explore whether having birth history information does in fact change one's sense of identity. Does meeting a birth relative and learning genealogical information affect one's self-
concept? Do reunions uphold the expectations put forth by those recommending changes to legislation? More specifically, this study attempted to answer the question, "Do adoption reunions affect adult adoptee's self-concept?" This question needs to be clearly answered when it forms the basis for such important events that affect the lives of all members of the adoption circle.

**Definition of Terms**

Terms, such as "adoptee," "birth parent," "adoptive parent," and "birth relative" were used throughout this research. Although these terms are not ideal, they are the terms used throughout the literature. Therefore, in the interest of maintaining consistency, these terms were also used in this research.

**Adoptee**

"Adoptee" was used throughout this research to mean an adult person, over the age of 19, who was legally adopted to a family outside of his or her birth family.

**Birth Parent**

A "birth parent" is a birth mother or birth father who is the biological parent.

**Reunion**

For the purposes of this study, a person was considered to have had a reunion if he or she acquired identifying information (ie. name, address and/or phone number) and had made direct contact with a birth relative. The contact could have been through letters, phone calls, or in-person.
CHAPTER II
Literature Review

Research into the phenomenon of adoption began in the 1950's and has been on the increase within the last two decades. Paton (1954) appears to have initiated the research on adult adoptees; her study of forty adult adoptees who described their searches for their birth parents was the first of its kind (Aumend & Barrett, 1984). In recent years, more and more attention has been given to adoption and its specific effects on adoptees, birth parents and adoptive parents. As researchers have learned more about adoption, the quality of the research has improved. For instance, recent researchers have moved from drawing their samples from clinical populations to using larger samples of adoptees drawn from the general population. They have also expanded their focus on adoption to include all members of the adoption circle and the various issues that affect them. Nevertheless, the research literature on the experiences of search and reunion between birth parents and adoptees is still exceedingly limited.

The most predominant clinical issue described in the literature on adoption focuses on identity and self concept in the adoptee. This was also the primary focus of the present study, therefore, the following review discusses the research that is pertinent to this area of study. It examines research on the influence of birth history on identity, research comparing adoptees to nonadoptees, and research on reunions and their effects on identity and self concept.

This chapter also describes the development of the primary measure used in the current study, the Tennessee Self Concept Scale (TSCS), its definition of self concept, and some relevant research on this instrument. Prior to the discussion of the literature on the TSCS and on self-concept and identity in adoptees, this chapter will begin by reviewing the terms "self concept" and "identity" more generally. A review of the
literature revealed that there is much ambiguity regarding these terms and their meanings. Therefore, it may be useful to briefly discuss the definition of self-concept and review relevant theories before proceeding to a review of the literature regarding the self-concept of adoptees.

Self Concept

Reviewing the literature on self-concept is complicated by the fact that there is much ambiguity in the literature regarding the definition of self-concept and how to measure it. The term "self concept" is often used interchangeably in the literature with the terms "self," "self-identity," "ego identity," and "identity." There does not appear to be any consensus on the differentiation of these terms and they seem to be used interchangably throughout the literature to refer to the same process and phenomena. In fact, some of the literature devoted to the examination of identity admits that "there is an unresolved definition of identity" (Maxime, 1986, p. 101), and some researchers have complained about the wide disparity of terms and criteria employed in measuring self concept (Fitts, 1972).

There are varying definitions of self concept, but in one way or another, most refer to the self concept as the image or picture a person has of himself or herself (Maxime, 1986). Over the last few years, researchers have begun to turn their attention to developing a more precise definition of what constitutes the self-concept. The emerging view is that self-concept is dynamic and multidimensional, rather than unidimensional and static. It is future oriented, and involves self-knowledge about one's goals and motives, personal standards and values, and rules and strategies for regulating and controlling one's behaviour (Nurius, 1986; Wayment & Zetlin, 1989). According to this view, the self-concept develops "from a complex interaction between the capabilities of the individual, the social environment in which self-evaluation occurs,
and cognitive development which governs the type and scope of information people can incorporate into their own self-definition at any one point in development" (Coleman, Herzverg, & Morris, 1977, p. 26).

Most theories of self concept agree that the process of self-concept development is never really completed; rather, it is actively proceeding from birth to death. Burns (1979) writes "the development of the self-concept does not occur in an all-or-none fashion which permits us to say that up to one point in time [a person] does not possess a self-concept, but then suddenly, eureka-like, he [or she] has" (p. 149). Erik Erikson asserts that "a sense of identity ... is never gained nor maintained once and for all ... it is constantly lost and regained" (Erikson, 1959, p. 118). According to Erikson (1959), "identity" refers to "a sense of 'knowing where one is going,' and an inner assuredness of anticipated recognition from those who count" (p 118). It refers to the achievement of an inner cohesiveness and self-definition which requires the establishment of a feeling of connectedness between one's past, present, and future and integration of the various ascribed and achieved social roles and skills (Stein & Hoopes, 1985).

Relevant Theories

Before discussing the literature on the development of self-concept in adoptees, it may be useful to review some relevant theories in order to more fully understand the process. As previously discussed, some authors believe that the development of identity and self-concept begins at birth and continues throughout the life cycle (Burns, 1979; Erikson, 1959). Erik Erikson developed a model which he maintains describes the stages that people go through in developing a sense of identity. Other authors have modified this model to apply to specific groups of people. For instance, Carol Gilligan (1982) has developed a model which she maintains is more applicable to women, and Brodzinsky, Schechter and Henig (1992) have suggested additions to
Erikson's model to make it more applicable to adoptees. The following section will begin by describing Erikson's model and will then discuss the relevance of its stages to men and women, in general, and to people who were adopted.

Erik Erikson's theory of identity development is perhaps the most well-known model of identity development. Erikson developed a neo-Freudian model of development which describes the conflicts that people face at each life stage and the qualities that emerge upon the resolution of these conflicts. To Erikson, identity begins to develop at birth, intensifies at adolescence, and proceeds throughout the lifespan. Each stage of one's life involves psychological tasks which have an impact on the development of a sense of self.

In the first stage of Erikson's model, infancy, the most important psychological task is the development of a sense of trust. Erikson (1950) states that "this forms the basis in the child for a sense of identity which will later combine a sense of being 'all right', of being oneself, and of becoming what other people trust one will become" (p. 249). Successful resolution of this task depends on the child developing a sense that he or she can rely on his or her own behaviour as well as that of the caregiver. Without this sense of trust, a person may grow up doubting his or her own self-worth and doubting the people around him or her.

The tasks in the toddler and preschool stages are the development of autonomy versus shame and doubt, and then initiative versus guilt. In order to develop autonomy, a firmly developed sense of trust is necessary. The toddler must feel basic faith in himself or herself and in the world in order to take the risk of individuating and "standing on his or her own feet" while accepting the limits and expectations of others. If this sense of autonomy is undermined by loss of self-control or parental over-control, Erikson postulates that a lasting sense of shame and doubt in one's self is developed. This sense of shame and doubt will likely have an effect on the development of initiative versus guilt in the next stage. If a child has developed a reasonable sense of
autonomy, he or she is likely to take initiative without a sense of guilt or fear. However, if this task is not successfully resolved, then he or she is likely to incorporate a sense of guilt when taking initiative in tasks or relationships (Erikson, 1959).

The fourth stage occurs between the ages of six and twelve and the task is the development of industry versus inferiority. Erikson (1968) maintains that at this stage, children attach themselves to role models, such as teachers and other adults, and they want to watch and imitate people representing occupations which they can aspire to. A child begins "to be something of a worker and potential provider ... learn to win recognition by producing things ... and can become an eager and absorbed unit of a productive situation" (p. 124). There are some risks to the development of identity at this stage, though. For example, one might continue to compare himself or herself to his or her parents if not successfully individuated before entering this stage, and this might result in a sense of inferiority rather than industry. Another danger to the developing identity in this stage that an overly conforming child might accept being a good worker as the only criterion of worthwhileness, and might too easily sacrifice imagination, playfulness, and experimentation of all that he or she could be (Erikson, 1959, 1968).

This stage of the development of industry is an important stage for the development of one's sense of social worth because industry involves doing things beside and with others (Erikson, 1959). According to Erikson (1959), "with the establishment of a good relationship to the world of skills and to those who teach and share the new skills, childhood proper comes to an end" (p. 89) and adolescence begins. This stage is the most significant for the development of identity, and often takes many years, if not forever, to resolve. Erikson coined the term "identity crisis" for the tasks involved in this stage. Resolution of this identity crisis involves integrating different aspects of the self with each other over different points in time (Brodzinsky, Schechter, & Henig, 1992). One begins to focus on more abstract, moral and
philosophical questions, such as "What is the meaning of life?" and more personally, "Who am I?" "Why am I here?" and "Where am I going?"

James Marcia, of Simon Fraser University in B.C., has postulated four ways to resolve the "identity crisis" identified by Erikson (Brodzinsky, Schechter, & Henig, 1992). Briefly, the first way is what Marcia calls "identity achievement." This occurs when a person consciously evaluates his or her own belief system by trying on different roles and incorporating moral, political, religious and ideological values. This usually does not occur until late adolescence or early adulthood. The individual who remains in the identity crisis into adulthood and is unable to commit to a particular path is considered to be in "moratorium." This period is usually short-term and one will either resolve the crisis and move on to identity achievement or will move to "identity diffusion." Identity diffusion may occur when a person does not identify with a nurturing figure, does not explore options, and is unsure of what he or she wants. If an individual is unable to make a commitment to a particular role and a personally relevant set of moral values, he or she is said to be "identity diffused." Alternatively, the fourth way in which the identity crisis may be resolved is through "identity foreclosure." According to Marcia, identity foreclosure individuals never really experienced an identity crisis, yet they have made a commitment to a set of values, a career path, or a role in life. They look as though they have achieved a solid identity, but not by exploring who they are, but rather by falling into who it was always assumed they would be (Marcia, 1966; Brodzinsky, Schechter, & Henig, 1992).

This process of identity achievement is dynamic and continually evolves. A person can be at one stage for one aspect of their identity and at another for other aspects. However, Erikson cautions that the experiences of adolescence and the stage of "identity crisis" will affect the psychological tasks of the following stages of adulthood. That is, in order for the final three stages of life, those of adulthood, and their corresponding psychological tasks to be resolved, a person must have integrated
and consolidated the tasks of the prior stages. For instance, the task in early adulthood is "intimacy versus isolation." Erikson states that "it is only when identity formation is well on its way that true intimacy ... is possible" (Erikson, 1968, p 135). The tasks of "generativity" in middle adulthood and "ego integrity" in late adulthood are also dependent on the successful resolution of the prior tasks. In these last two stages, people focus on the purpose of their lives and what of themselves they want to leave behind. Then, by late adulthood, they reflect on the events of their life and come to terms with the accomplishments and failures. Many of the issues that were important at earlier stages, such as autonomy, identity, intimacy, and generativity, may become important once again.

When Erik Erikson was himself in old age, he began to see the resonances of the last stage of life. When he was in his eighties, he refined his original model and stated that old age is not only about resolving the crisis of "ego identity versus despair" but rather about revisiting every one of the conflicts that had been encountered in earlier life. Erikson maintained that "during old age, the prominent conflicts of every other stage -- trust versus mistrust, autonomy versus shame and doubt, initiative versus guilt, industry versus inferiority, identity versus confusion, intimacy versus isolation, and generativity versus stagnation -- occur one final time" (Brodzinsky, Schechter, & Henig, 1992, p. 166).

Some researchers have questioned whether men and women differ in self concept and whether Erikson's stages apply to both genders. Erikson (1968) himself acknowledges that there may be some differences in how males and females develop their identity. As a brief adjunct to his theory, he suggests that the sequence of the stages might be a bit different for women; that for men, the resolution of identity precedes intimacy, but for women, the tasks of identity and intimacy are fused. That is, he contends that the female is oriented towards her biologically based role of filling her "inner space" by becoming a mother, and therefore, she comes to know herself by her
relationships with others, in particular, with her mate (Erikson, 1968). This view that women define themselves in terms of motherhood and their relationships with men is now viewed by many as archaic; however, it has acted as a catalyst for the examination of the self-concept of women.

Carol Gilligan (1982) has challenged Erikson's stages and their applicability to women. She points out that despite Erikson's observation of gender differences, his model of the life-cycle stages has not been revised to be more applicable to women. Gilligan argues that Erikson's model does not apply to women because the model is based on the concept that identity is formed through individuation and autonomy. Through her studies, she has concluded that women see the world "comprised of relationships rather than of people standing alone, a world that coheres through human connection" (Gilligan, 1982, p. 29). Gilligan, therefore, postulates that women assume connection and develop their sense of self concept and identity based on relationships and their attachment to others, while men assume separation, and explore their identity through autonomy and individuation. This difference between the genders forms the core for Gilligan's model of the female life cycle.

Gilligan (1982) refers to Nancy Chodorow to explain the differences between the genders. Briefly, Chodorow suggests that because the primary caretaker until the age of three, for both sexes, is typically female, the interpersonal dynamics of gender identity formation are different for males and females. "Female identity formation takes place in a context of ongoing relationship since 'mothers tend to experience their daughters as more like, and continuous with, themselves'. Correspondingly, girls, in identifying themselves as female, experience themselves as like their mothers, thus fusing the experience of attachment with the process of identity formation. In contrast, 'mothers experience their sons as a male opposite', and boys, in defining themselves as masculine, separate their mothers from themselves' ... For boys, but not girls, issues of differentiation have become intertwined with sexual issues" (Gilligan, 1982, p. 7-8).
This theory of differences in identity based on attachment and separation may have some significance for the formation of self-concept in adoptees. It may be that the process of identity development based on a relationship with a primary caregiver may be different for people who were adopted than for those who were not. The studies and literature on this are very scarce. Recently, Brodzinsky, Schechter and Henig (1992) have written a book which examines theories of identity development and discusses their application to people who were adopted.

Using Erikson's theory as a basic model, Brodzinsky, Schechter and Henig (1992) suggest that the development of self concept is different for adoptees than for nonadoptees. They have formulated a lifespan model of identity development in adoptees. It should be noted that this is a new model; one which the authors claim was based on their "professional experiences, accumulated over a combined total of fifty-five years of clinical and research work with adoptees and their families" (p. 1). However, the authors do not indicate whether information for the model was collected in a systematic way, or how their experiences were verified and organized into this model. Nevertheless, Brodzinsky et. al. (1992) have introduced a novel approach to the examination of identity development in adoptees which may be worthy of further discussion.

Basically, Brodzinsky et. al. (1992) maintain that adoptees move through the same developmental tasks as nonadoptees but that doing so can be more difficult for them. They suggest that adoptees, in particular those who are placed in their adoptive homes at an early age (before the age of six months), usually progress through the infancy and toddler stages in a manner similar to nonadoptees. They form attachments and resolve the tasks of trust and autonomy in the same way as nonadoptees. In fact, in a longitudinal study currently being conducted at Simon Fraser University, the researcher evaluated children who were adopted from orphanages in Romania, eleven months and then again four years after they were adopted. They found no differences
in attachment between children who were adopted before the age of four months and their Canadian born nonadopted peers (Ames, 1996). However, according to Brodzinsky et. al. (1992), by preschool age, children who are adopted begin to deal with issues related to their adoption. This is often the age when they may begin to notice differences in physical appearance, especially in interracial adoptions, and typically when they first learn about adoption. By middle childhood, they may begin to develop a more thorough understanding of adoption and its logical implications. At this stage, the child develops an internal mental representation or fantasy of his or her birth parents and might start to feel a sense of loss for the parents and the family he or she never knew. This sense of grief is usually more subtle for children who are adopted at an early age than for children who begin living with their adoptive families after the age of six or eight months, after they had begun to form attachments to others.

As the child begins to prepare for the independence associated with adolescence, he or she begins to separate psychologically from the family. In most families, this becomes a time of conflict. Most children experience what Freud called the "family romance", whereby they fantasize that they were secretly adopted and that they have other parents somewhere. Resolution of this stage is more difficult for adopted children than for children who are raised with their biological parent, because the "fantasy" is largely true. "There is always a mythical 'other' set of parents out there who can hold on to their qualities of goodness -- allowing the child to continue investing the day-to-day parents with qualities of badness" (Brodzinsky et. al, 1992, p 77). On the other hand, the adoptee may entertain fantasies that the birth parents possess the bad qualities, especially if they experience adoption as a rejection from their birth parents and a rescue by their adoptive parents. Brodzinsky et. al. (1992) suggest that how a child views the relinquishment may shape the family romance fantasies that he or she experiences.
Middle childhood is also the time when one begins to identify with role models in order to resolve the task of industry versus inferiority. For most children, middle childhood and early adolescence is a time where one is very self-conscious about being "different" in any way. Dr. David Kirk (1964) suggests that at this time it becomes very important to openly acknowledge the differences in the family rather than reject the differences and pretend the family is like any other. In this way, the family is more likely to create an environment where the adolescence feels secure to learn about himself or herself and experiment with "who am I?"

During adolescence, people who are adopted grapple with the same questions as people who are not adopted -- "Who am I?," "Why am I here?," and "Where am I going?" However, adopted adolescents must also consider these questions in relation to adoption. That is, according to Brodzinsky et. al (1992), adoptees who successfully resolve the task of identity achievement tend to be those whose families allow them to discuss adoption openly and positively, without limits, and support them in resolving how being adopted does or does not fit into an overall sense of themselves. If adoption is discussed, but in a negative or unaccepting way, one would expect this to cause additional difficulties for the adolescent. On the other hand, adoptees who are in identity foreclosure usually do not explore the meaning of their adoption and deny that it has any importance to them. They tend to live in families where there has not been much discussion about adoption and they may experience a strong sense of identity as a member of the family and commit to an identity without exploring what it means to be adopted. Initially, they may make reasonably good adjustments, but events in later adulthood might cause them to reexamine their sense of self (Brodzinsky et. al, 1992).

For many people, adulthood is a time of examining life and life choices. The tasks of adulthood -- intimacy, generativity, and ego integrity -- demand that individuals continue to examine and reexamine their identity or sense of self. For adoptees, this might include the reexamination of issues related to adoption. As previously discussed,
Erikson maintains that identity requires the achievement of an inner cohesiveness and self-definition which requires the establishment of a feeling of connectedness between one's past, present, and future. Like nonadoptees, adoptees attempt to consolidate their identity by reflecting on the past in order to understand themselves in the present and future (Brodzinsky et. al., 1992). However, unlike people who were raised with their biological families, most adoptees have limited information about their past and about their history. According to Brodzinsky et. al. (1992), this is why so many adoptees feel cut off from a part of themselves and feel discontinuity in their identity. For them, consolidating their identity requires obtaining information, and connecting with their history in order to understand themselves as a whole person in the present, future, and past.

A review of the literature over the last two decades indicated that there is a minimal amount of research on how adoptees consolidate their identity in adulthood and throughout the lifespan. Brodzinsky et. al. (1992) seem to be the first to make any distinctions between people who were adopted and those that were not and the process of identity development. Although self concept and identity formation in adoptees is widely discussed in the literature, research to this point has focused on establishing whether or not there are any differences between adoptees and nonadoptees in this respect. This review will now turn to examination of the relevant research on the self-concept of adoptees.

**The Self-Concept of Adoptees**

Self-concept in adoptees is perhaps the most commonly discussed issue in the literature on adoption and it is also one of the most controversial. Some researchers claim that adoptees are more vulnerable than the general population to identity conflicts (Sorosky, Baran & Pannor, 1975; Pannor, Baran & Sorosky, 1978; Hoopes,
1990; Brodzinsky, 1987) and advocates of open records argue that not only do adoptees have the right to information about their birth families, but they need this information in order to establish their true sense of identity. Others maintain that although this information may be important to adoptees, it is not necessary for forming identity (Aumend & Barrett, 1984).

A majority of research articles have argued that adoptees seek information on their birth families in order to establish a more cohesive identity (Triseliotis, 1973; Sorosky et. al, 1975; Day, 1979, cited in Aumend & Barrett, 1984; Depp, 1982; Dukette, 1984; Andersen, 1988, 1989; Sachdev, 1989a, 1989b, 1992). Triseliotis (1973) and Sorosky et. al. (1975) are two of the earliest studies on the effects of adoption on identity. For both of these studies, the authors interviewed adult adoptees and found that adoptees were motivated to search for reasons related to identity. After interviewing seventy adult adoptees, Triseliotis concluded that a theme of "negative self image" described one of the reasons why adoptees searched for their birth parents. Sorosky et. al. (1975) interviewed fifty adult adoptees and birth parents and reported that many adoptees claimed that the reunion had helped them resolve their identity conflicts. More recently, a qualitative study conducted in Ontario interviewed 124 adoptees on what motivated them to search (Sachdev, 1992). Sachdev concluded that "the motivation behind search is largely the adoptee's intense identity and genealogical needs ..." (p. 59) and "their compelling need to attain a more cohesive identity" (p. 58). Writing about his own personal reasons for searching, Andersen (1988) discloses that he has "a compelling need to know [his] own story" (p. 18). He concludes that adoptees "search for roots, for connection, for identity" (Andersen, 1989, p. 625).

Not all adoptees have the same desire to search, though. While approximately two-thirds of the applications received by the Adoption Reunion Registry in B.C. are from adult adoptees, one-third are from birth parents. Some of the adoptees contacted by the Registry on behalf of the birth parents are not interested in a reunion. The
reasons these adoptees give for declining contact vary. Some say they are not prepared yet, that this has not come at a good time for them. Others decline contact because they believe that it would disappoint their adoptive parents, and some say that they are just not interested. How do these nonsearching adoptees differ from those who have a desire to search and connect with their birth relatives?

Although some early research has suggested the need for comparing searchers to nonsearchers (Triseliotis, 1973; Dukette, 1975; Smith, 1976), there are very few studies that do so. Aumend and Barrett (1984) conducted a study with to examine whether there were any differences between searching and nonsearching adoptees. They looked specifically for differences in self concepts, attitudes towards adoptive parents, experiences of adoption, and desire for medical and personal information. Using the Tennessee Self Concept Scale (1965), they tested seventy-one adoptees who identified themselves as searchers, forty-nine as nonsearchers, and eleven who were undecided. Their data indicated that there were differences between the groups. Nonsearchers had less concern about their own backgrounds, had more positive attitudes towards their adoptive parents, and more positive self-concepts.

Other studies have examined the effects of adoption on identity formation by comparing individuals who were adopted to those who were not adopted (Norvell & Guy, 1977; Simmons, 1980; Stein & Hoopes, 1985). These studies have produced conflicting results. Simmons (1980) found significant differences between adoptees and nonadoptees on twelve out of nineteen scales from three different personality measures: the California Psychological Inventory, the Adjectives Checklist, and the Tennessee Self Concept Scale. He reported that adoptees were less well socialized, tended to be more impulsive and demanding, and had lower self esteem. He interpreted his results as supporting the hypothesis that adoptees have more difficulty than nonadoptees in forming a sense of identity. Norvell and Guy (1977) and Stein and Hoopes (1985), on the other hand, reported quite the opposite. Using the Berger Self
Concept Scale, Norvell and Guy found no significant differences between adopted and nonadopted individuals eighteen to twenty-five years of age. They concluded that adoptive status alone is not responsible for negative identity.

Stein and Hoopes' (1985) study supported the findings of Norvell and Guy (1977). They used the Tan Ego Identity Scale, the Offer Self Image Questionnaire, and a Semistructured Interview which they developed, to test fifty adolescents who were adopted and forty-one who were not. Their findings indicated no significant differences between the two groups. "More specifically, adopted subjects showed no deficits in functioning on measures of overall identity when compared to their nonadopted counterparts" (p. 34). In this study, the adoptees actually scored statistically higher than nonadoptees on one of the measures, the Tan Ego Identity Scale. The Stein and Hoopes study suggests that adoptees may not, in fact, be more vulnerable to identity conflicts, as others have suggested.

The results of the aforementioned studies do not support the theoretical bases often cited to justify open records and reunions between adoptees and birth relatives. That is, there is little conclusive evidence that adoptees are more vulnerable to struggles with identity formation, or that their scores on measures of self-concept differ from those of individuals who were not adopted. However, the reasons often cited in support of open records include issues related to identity and self-concept. In my work as a counsellor at the Adoption Reunion Registry, I commonly heard adult adoptees claim that they felt there was "a part of them missing," or that they were "trying to fill in the gaps," or some such statement implying that they needed to acquire more information about themselves, through contact with birth relatives, in order "to feel whole."

The self-reports of adoptees overwhelmingly support the premise that adoption reunion have a positive influence on identity (Depp, 1982; Baran et al., 1974; Sachdev, 1992; Dukette, 1984; Campbell et al., 1991; Andersen, 1989; Gladstone and Westhues,
Sachdev (1992) conducted a study that indicated that reunions increase identity for adoptees. Sachdev developed a structured questionnaire which he administered to 124 adoptees who had experienced a reunion six months to four years prior. He reports that 86.9% of adoptees were pleased to moderately pleased that they had met their birth mothers, while 93.9% claimed they had no regrets. Sachdev writes that "almost all the adoptees (93.3%) had the unique experience of being able to connect themselves for the first time with their generation line and to share physical resemblances and interests with someone related by blood. This experience contributed to a more cohesive identity" (p. 64). He quotes an adoptee who said, "It [reunion with birth mother] has given me a new identity for the first time in thirty years. I really know who I am." (p. 64).

Like Sachdev, other researchers have also reported statements made by adoptees regarding the effects of reunion on their identity. Statements such as, "I feel as if a part of me was placed back inside me (like a puzzle)" (Campbell, Silverman & Patti, 1991, p. 332), "My self image and self confidence greatly improved" (Campbell et. al., 1991, p. 332), and "... upon learning my family history, I now know who I am" (Andersen, 1989, p. 627), are pervasive in the literature. Based on these types of responses from adoptees, many studies have concluded that reunions do provide information essential to adoptees in forming identity.

Most of these findings, however, were based on the self-reports of adoptees, either through interviews or questionnaires developed by the researchers. Studies, such as Depp (1982), Sachdev (1992), and Campbell, Silverman and Patti (1991), for example, used questionnaires developed by the researchers. These questionnaires are not published with the study, nor are validity or reliability scores reported. It is very likely that these measures are not scientifically sound. It is difficult, therefore, to judge the significance and generalizability of these studies. While these self reports are likely to be honest indications of what these specific adoptees think and feel in
response to the questions posed, it would be irresponsible to generalize to a larger population.

It is possible that these self reports of adoptees could be influenced by various other factors. For example, these adoptees may be experiencing the effects of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Andersen (1989) points out that these statements reflecting increased identity "might in large part reflect the fact that these people have been led to believe that self-completion is what should happen following reunion" (p. 629). Another factor which may account for adoptee's reports of increased identity is a response format commonly known as "faking good." That is, it may be that the subjects in these studies responded in the way they believed would meet the researcher's expectations. Perhaps the questionnaires were so worded that it was apparent to the subjects what the researcher was looking for.

The sampling procedures of these studies may also be problematic. Because of the lack of openness surrounding adoption reunions, researchers have customarily been restricted to drawing their samples from lists of adoptees affiliated with specific, usually grass-roots, organizations. These groups have been very active in lobbying for open records, and generally, only those who agree with this practice are affiliated with them. When researchers draw samples from these groups, then, they are drawing from a select group with a select bias. It is difficult to know whether these groups do in fact reflect the views of the greater population of adoptees.

It would not be an overstatement to say that all supporters of adoption reunions believe that one's sense of identity will benefit from the experience. However, the research that tests this belief is limited at best. Some have argued that the benefit to identity comes gradually as one moves throughout the process of search and reunion, that the benefit is in the process, not in the end result. Andersen (1989), for example, distinguishes between the medical model and the psychological model and proposes people's expectations of the effects of reunion on identity will depend on which model
they adhere to. That is, those who adhere to the medical model see search and reunion as some extraneous event which will resolve or "cure" their identity issues for them. On the other hand, adoptees who take the psychological model's approach see search and reunion as merely one step in a series of many others; their goal is growth rather than cure. This approach is consistent with models, such as Erikson's, that view identity as something that is progressive, constantly changing and modifying.

Before moving on in this paper, it is necessary to point out once again that the literature on adoption reunions is exceedingly limited and controversial. Advocates of open adoption records claim that adoptees have a right to this information and need this information in order to attain a cohesive sense of identity. Others have reported that adoptees are able to develop identities just as well without this information. With changes being currently proposed to the adoption legislation, knowledge and research in this area is necessary now more than ever. This study will attempt to add to the body of research cited above which contribute to knowledge in the field of adoption and reunions.

The Tennessee Self Concept Scale

This study sought to add to the literature on adoption by measuring the self-concept of adoptees using a standardized measure of self-concept. As previously discussed, the definition of "self-concept" is quite ambiguous which makes measuring it a difficult task. Nevertheless, various authors have attempted to clarify "self-concept" and to develop instruments to measure it. One of the first authors to do this was William H. Fitts. In 1966, he developed the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (TSCS) which continues to be one of the most popular measures of self-concept (Archambault, 1991, cited in Buros, 1992). This section will briefly review the literature on the TSCS as this was the standardized measure selected for use in the present study.
Fitts (1972) viewed self-concept as multidimensional, incorporating both an external and an internal frame of reference. He maintained that one's internal sense of self is developed by interaction and feedback from the external world. That is, Fitts' view is that in order to develop a sense of self, a person must receive continuing feedback from the external world, and to obtain this feedback, one must be willing and able to disclose himself or herself to others (Fitts, 1972).

This view of self-concept as multidimensional has received increased empirical support over the last fifteen years. Wayment and Zetlin (1989) state that it is this model of self-concept that has been affirmed and reaffirmed by researchers and theorists. Fitts designed the Tennessee Self Concept Scale to meet the demand for a measure which operationalized this multidimensional view of self-concept. The TSCS provides measures for 14 basic scores. The Total Positive Score reflects overall self-concept. There are also eight subscales of self concept (Identity, Self-Satisfaction, Behaviour, Physical Self, Moral-Ethical Self, Personal Self, Family Self, and Social Self) and five other scales which measure variability and/or the validity of the responses: the Self Criticism Scale, the Distribution of Responses, and the Variability Scales (including the Total Variability and Column and Row Variabilities).

The TSCS scales are organized into a 5 X 3 matrix. The 5 vertical columns describe scales of an "external frame of reference" and the 3 horizontal rows contain scales of an "internal frame of reference." The "external" scales, which include Physical Self, Moral-Ethical Self, Personal Self, Family Self, and Social Self, could be manifested in relation to the 3 "internal" scales, Identity, Self-Satisfaction, and Behaviour. The derived self concept score is the sum of the 90 items which represent all of these aspects of self concept. There are an additional 10 items which are taken from the L Scale of the MMPI and make up the validity scale, Self-Criticism.

Some researchers have questioned the lack of empirical information about the structure and discriminant validity of the TSCS (Roffe, 1981, Marsh & Richards, 1988).
Marsh and Richards (1988) report extensive data from analyses conducted to examine the internal structure and construct validity of the TSCS scales. They found consistent support for three of the scales (Family, Social and Physical) but less consistent support for the other scales. They maintain that the TSCS is an important instrument because it was the first to emphasize the multiple dimensions of self concept and because of its heuristic value; however, they infer that it is not a strong instrument when judged by today's test standards because, although the TSCS was designed to be multidimensional, multidimensional statistical procedures were apparently not used in its construction and selection of items. Marsh & Richards (1988) suggest that the items be updated and refined.

Originally, Fitts developed norms for the TSCS based on a standardization group of 626 American participants, ranging in age from 12 to 68. According to the TSCS manual, this group was composed of "an approximate balance of males and females, blacks and whites, representatives of all social, economic, and intellectual levels, and educational levels from the sixth grade level through the doctoral level" (Roid & Fitts, 1988, p.56). Based on testing and data collection in the U.S., Fitts maintained that this norm group was representative and that individual norms for differences related to ethnicity, gender, age, and socioeconomic status were not necessary. The TSCS manual reports the findings of some subsequent studies which generally support Fitt's contention that separate norms are not necessary (Roid & Fitts, 1988).

However, critics of the measure have argued that the norms overrepresent college students, persons under the age of 30 and caucasians and may not be useful for all groups of people (Archambault, 1991 in Buros, 1992). For example, Hoffman and Gellen (1984) used a database accumulated over a twelve year period to compare the norms to scores derived for various age levels, ethnic groups and both genders. Based on a sample of 743 adults enrolled in graduate classes at a Florida university
between 1971 and 1982, they concluded that it may be inappropriate to use these norms across different groups. Gadzella and Williamson (1984) report differences in scores between men and women on TSCS scales. They reported that women scored significantly higher on 7 of the 9 subscales and on the Total Score. However, it should be noted that Gadzella and Williamson's (1984) study was based on a very small sample, 19 men and 69 women, and the authors caution that further studies with a larger sample of men are needed. Sharpley and Hattie (1983) also questioned the generalizability of the TSCS norms across genders and across cultures. Their study was based on a sample of Australian undergraduate college students, aged 23 to 54. Their findings indicated significant difference between the group of 101 men and the group of 101 women and also between the Australian sample and the TSCS norms. Sharpley and Hattie (1983) concluded that applicability of the TSCS norms across cultures is not justified and that across genders is questionable.

A review of the literature did not indicate any studies on the TSCS based on a Canadian sample group. Although some may argue that the variances between Canadians and Americans are too small to make this an issue, others would disagree and contend that there are distinct differences between Canadians and Americans that would warrant verification of generalizability of the TSCS norms. For instance, one of the most primary concerns for this study was using the TSCS with First Nations participants and the applicability of the reported norms to aboriginal people. The TSCS manual (1988) reports a study by Bognar (1981) conducted in four aboriginal communities in Labrador. He found that the True/False Ratio was quite elevated in all four samples and concluded that the TSCS should be used cautiously with First Nations people. Until more conclusive evidence is attained supporting TSCS norms across different cultures, ethnicities and genders, generalizing based on these norms should be done selectively and carefully.
In light of the above concerns regarding generalizability of the TSCS, one might question if the TSCS was the most appropriate instrument for this study. Amongst self-concept measures, the TSCS was deemed the best choice and was selected for this study for various reasons: First, the TSCS is considered one of the most popular tests of self concept (Archambault, 1991 in Buros, 1992). Various studies on self concept have used this measure and it has also been used by researchers in examining the self concept of adult adoptees. In particular, the TSCS was chosen because it was used by Aumend and Barrett (1984) and Simmons (1980) in their respective studies; by using the same measure, it became possible to more directly compare the results of this study to this previous research. Second, the TSCS is geared towards the multiple dimensions of self-concept and includes a subscale on Family self. This scale has been found to have high construct validity (Marsh & Richards, 1988) and in relation to other instruments on self concept, the TSCS stands out on this aspect. Because adoption is in large part about the self in relation to "family," it was desirable to use a measure which included items about family. The third reason for the selection of the TSCS was that the test can be easily self-administered within 10 to 20 minutes. This made it conducive to the mailout strategy which was employed. And finally, the TSCS was selected amongst other instruments because of its reported validity and reliability. Test-retest reliabilities for the TSCS Total Score are typically about .90, and the Total Score has been found to correlate with other self-concept instruments, including the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory, and the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (Dowd, in Buros, 1992; Roid & Fitts, 1988).

Rationale for this Study

As previously discussed, supporters of open adoption records argue that knowledge of one's biological history constitutes an innate human need, and that denial
of that need leads to emotional difficulties, especially in the area of identity formation (Curtis, 1986; Sorosky, Baran & Pannor, 1975; Lifton, 1979). Some researchers have reported that adoptees have difficulties that are unique to them and not shared by individuals that grow up with birth families (Schechter, in Lifton, 1979) and that adoptees make up a disproportionate number of people in residential treatment centers and clinic populations (Lifton, 1979). Although there is no consensus on this and some findings have refuted these claims (Kadushin, cited in Curtis, 1986; Hoopes, 1982, in Stein & Hoopes, 1985), changes to the B.C. Adoption Act are based on this belief. The legislation is moving towards open records because "... this kind of information can be critical to some adoptees at adolescence who may have trouble forming identities when they lack information about their origins" (Report to the Minister of Social Services, 1994, p. 29).

Statements in provincial reports such as that cited above suggest that changes to the adoption legislation are based on the premise that information on birth history is important for adoptees in developing a sense of identity. In fact, theories on identity maintain that history is important for identity formation. Erikson's theory of identity formation, for instance, maintains that the "individual organism, from birth, has a history that is always interacting with the present moment" (Wright, 1982, p. xiii). Some studies have argued, though, that adoptees are able to develop a sense of identity without information on their birth families (Stein & Hoopes, 1985) This has led some to postulate that the process of identity formation may be different for adoptees than for nonadoptees (Hoopes, 1990; Simmons, 1980). If this is the case, then identity theories such as Erikson's, will have to be modified to apply to adoptees.

The primary aim of this research was to compare the self-concept scores of adoptees who have experienced a reunion with those who are awaiting a reunion. The conceptual rationale for this study was that adoptees who search for birth relatives do so for reasons related to their identity which would be reflected in the TSCS scores. It
was expected that reunions with birth relatives would answer questions, provide information and resolve issues affecting their self concept. Comparing the self concept of adoptees who had experienced a reunion with those who were still searching was a method of examining whether reunions do in fact uphold these expectations. If adoptees who experienced a reunion scored significantly higher on the TSCS, this would be consistent with the premise that reunions enhance the adoptees' sense of self concept. Alternatively, this might be contradicted if adoptees who have not had a reunion did not score any differently than those who have had a reunion. Furthermore, if adoptees' scores on the TSCS are within normal range of the general population's, it may be that birth history information is not as important to identity as is commonly believed. It may be that those who lack this information compensate for it with other means, and develop their identity through a modified process.

**Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were tested in this study:

**Hypothesis 1.**

H1: Adoptees who have experienced a reunion with a birth relative (Group 1) will score more positively on the Tennessee Self Concept Scale than those adoptees who are searching but have not experienced a reunion with a birth relative (Group 2).

H0: Adoptees who have experienced a reunion with a birth relative (Group 1) will not score more positively on the Tennessee Self Concept Scale than those adoptees who are searching but have not experienced a reunion with a birth relative (Group 2).
Hypothesis 2.

H2: Adoptees who initiated the search for their birth relative(s) (Group 1 and Group 2) will score lower on the Tennessee Self Concept Scale than those adoptees who did not initiate the search for their birth relative(s) (Group 3 and Group 4).

H0: Adoptees who initiated the search for their birth relative(s) (Group 1 and Group 2) will not score lower on the Tennessee Self Concept Scale than those adoptees who did not initiate the search for their birth relative(s) (Group 3 and Group 4).

Hypothesis 3.

H3: Adoptees who report that their hopes and expectations for the search and reunion were satisfied, or very satisfied, will score more positively on the Tennessee Self Concept Scale than those adoptees who report mixed, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

H0: Adoptees who report that their hopes and expectations for the search and reunion were satisfied, or very satisfied, will not score more positively on the Tennessee Self Concept Scale than those adoptees who report mixed, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Hypothesis 4.

H4: Adoptees who report that their hopes and expectations for the search and reunion were satisfied, or very satisfied will report a positive effect on their sense of self concept or identity.

H0: Adoptees who report that their hopes and expectations for the search and reunion were satisfied, or very satisfied will not report a positive effect on their sense of self concept or identity.
Hypothesis 5.

H5: Adoptees who report a positive effect on their sense of self concept or identity will score higher on the Tennessee Self Concept Scale than those who report a negative effect or no effect.

H0: Adoptees who report a positive effect on their sense of self concept or identity will not score higher on the Tennessee Self Concept Scale than those who report a negative effect or no effect.
CHAPTER III
Method

Design

This study employed a quasi-experimental design using naturally occurring groups to examine the relationship between the two constructs of self concept and adoption reunion. The study was designed as quantitative research and its purpose was to examine the possible effect of adoption reunions (the independent variable) on the self concept of adult adoptees (the dependent variable) as measured by the Tennessee Self Concept Scale (TSCS).

The study compared the scores of adoptees who initiated a search for, and experienced a reunion with, a birth parent or other birth relative (Group 1: searchers, post-reunion group) with those who have initiated a search but have not had a reunion (Group 2: searchers, pre-reunion group). In addition, the study was designed to compare the scores of these two groups of searching adoptees with the scores of adoptees who had not initiated a search for a birth relative. Group 3 (nonsearchers, post-reunion group) consisted of adoptees who did not initiate a search for a birth relative, but did enter into a reunion when a birth relative searched for and contacted them. The final group consisted of adoptees who have not searched, nor have they had contact with a birth relative (Group 4: nonsearchers, pre-reunion group).

Procedure

Studies on adoption have typically turned to local adoption organizations for assistance in contacting study participants. This study did the same. Originally, this researcher had planned to contact adoptees for the study through the B.C. Adoption
Reunion Registry. However, the Registry was not responsive to the research and chose not to participate. Two other local organizations were then approached and informed of this research. Both the Forget Me Not Family Society and the TRIAD Society volunteered to assist with the research.

The Forget Me Not Family Society and the TRIAD Society maintain a mailing list of their members. Because of the sensitivity of the topic, it was a priority that participants’ privacy and anonymity be protected, so at no point did this researcher have access to the mailing lists. Instead, the questionnaire packages were prepared and forwarded to the presidents of the two societies, who then addressed the envelopes to their respective members, and mailed the packages. The completed questionnaires were anonymously returned directly to the Counselling Psychology Department at U.B.C.

The questionnaire packages were mailed in mid-November, 1995, and were completed by participants, returned to U.B.C. and collected between December, 1995 and February, 1996. Each package included a self-addressed and stamped envelope, and a letter of introduction (see Appendix A), a background questionnaire (see Appendix B), and a reprinted copy, with permission, of the Tennessee Self Concept Scale (see Appendix C). The introductory letter explained the purpose of the study and how the package had been sent to participants. It also stressed that the questionnaires were to be completed and returned anonymously. Participants were asked to complete the questionnaires and return them within two weeks. They were also invited to write to the researcher by a separate letter if they wished to receive a summary of the study once completed. Approximately 10% of people who received the questionnaire package wrote requesting a summary of the results.
Participants

Participants were contacted through the Forget Me Not Family Society, and the TRIAD Society. All participants were adoptees who were registered members of one of these B.C. organizations. The majority of the Forget-Me-Not Family Society's and the TRIAD Society's members reside across Canada, although they also have members who live in the U.S. and abroad. A total of 299 questionnaire packages were sent to members of the two organizations living in Canada or the U.S. Of these, 166 were completed and returned by participants, resulting in a response rate of 55.5%. Of the 166 returned questionnaires, 7 were not included in the study because participants had not sufficiently completed the questionnaires. Therefore, the study included completed questionnaires from a total of 159 participants, 95% of which lived in Canada, and 5% in the U.S.

The study population was a heterogeneous, self-selected group. That is, all members of the TRIAD Society or the Forget Me Not Family Society who were adoptees over the age of nineteen were contacted by mail and asked to participate in the study. Because all participants of the study were volunteers who belonged to either one of these local organizations, the possibility of a sampling bias exists. Rosenthal and Rosnow (cited in Borg & Gall, 1989) have suggested that people who volunteer for studies may possess characteristics different than those of nonvolunteers. These characteristics may have an influence on the results of the study and the results may not generalize to the population from which the sample was drawn. In addition, the people who chose to be members of these organizations may also be distinct from people who are not members. For these two reasons, the results may be biased and may not generalize to the larger population of adoptees. The relatively high response rate for this study (55.5%) increases the confidence that the sample groups are representative of the population of adoptees that are members of these two
organizations; however, there is no indication of the representativeness of these members to the more general population of adoptees. This is a limitation of this study as it has also been of most of the previous research on adoption (Sachdev, 1992).

The overwhelming majority of adoptees who responded to the study were people who identified themselves as searchers (93.1%) who had either already completed a search or were in the process of searching. The demographic characteristics of the 159 adoptees who participated in the study are presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1
Characteristics of the Study Population (N=159)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Freq.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Cum %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reunion Group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 1: Completed a search and had contact with a birth relative</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>49.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2: In the process of searching and have not had contact with a birth relative</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>93.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3: Did not search, but a birth relative searched for them and they have had contact</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>96.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 4: Did not search and have not had contact with a birth relative</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>159</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Response omitted</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>78.0</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>159</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table continues)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Freq.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Cum %</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 to 24</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 29</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 to 39</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>66.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 to 49</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>86.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 to 59</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>96.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 or over</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education level</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response omitted</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some high school or completed high school</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational training or some college or university</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>74.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University graduate or postgraduate</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current Employment (participants checked all that applied)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional or semiprofessional</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>40.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical, sales, or technician</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled or semi-skilled manual labour</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homemaker</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: some participants in more than one category
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Freq</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Cum %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Household Income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response ommitted</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 12,000</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12,000 to 19,999</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,000 to 34,999</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>47.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35,000 to 49,999</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>66.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50,000 to 59,999</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>76.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60,000 and above</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>159</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country of residence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>95.0</td>
<td>95.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>159</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Area</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response ommitted</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>53.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>83.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>159</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(Table continues)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Freq.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Cum %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationship Status</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>53.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>62.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>64.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single/Never married</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>84.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living with significant other</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>98.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>159</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parenting</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have children</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>59.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not have children</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>159</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnic Heritage (participants checked all that applied)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>79.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (includes 5 or less of Hispanic, Asian, African, West Indian, Canadian and other)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Note:</strong> some participants checked any combination of above categories</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adoptive Parents' Ethnic Heritage</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>96.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (includes 5 or less of Asian, African, Canadian and other)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Note:</strong> some participants checked any combination of above categories</td>
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*(table continues)*
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Freq.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Cum %</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Religion</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response ommitted</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>64.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>32</td>
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<td>84.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
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<td>10.7</td>
<td>95.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<td><strong>Adoptive Parents' Religion</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Response ommitted</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>10.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>50.3</td>
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<td>Catholic</td>
<td>41</td>
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<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>98.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Know</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age When Began Living with Adoptive Family</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 3 months old</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>56.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 6 months old</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>73.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 12 months old</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>86.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 2 years old</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>93.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 to 4 years old</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>98.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 years and older</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>159</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Female adoptees constituted a majority (78%) of the participants, while males constituted approximately one-fifth (20.1%). All participants were over the age of 19, with the majority being under the age of 40 (66%). While 34% of participants were under the age of 30, only 7.5% were between 19 and 24, compared to 26.4% between 25 and 29.

The majority of respondents were either married (53.5%) or living with a significant other (14.5%), while 20.1% reported being single and never married. Less than 10% of respondents were divorced and less than 2% were widowed. Approximately 60% of respondents reported that they had children, and less than 2% reported that they had adopted children themselves or placed a child for adoption.

Approximately 75% of the participants had completed some form of vocational training, some college or university, or were university graduates or postgraduates. There were approximately the same proportion of university graduates or post graduates (25.8%) as people who had completed high school or some high school (23.9%) with the remaining having completed some form of vocational training or some college or university (49.7%). This education level was further reflected in the employment demographics of the participants where 40.3% of participants indicated that their employment included a professional or semiprofessional occupation.

Participants indicated their ethnic heritage as being included in any one or more of the following groups: European (79.9%), Aboriginal (4.4%), and Other (10.8%), which included Hispanic, Asian, African, West Indian, and Canadian. Some participants (10.1%) did not know their ethnic heritage. The majority of participants indicated their adoptive parents' ethnic heritage as European (96.2%), and/or Aboriginal (1.9%) and/or Other (7.6%), which included Asian, African, Canadian and other. Some adoptees replied that they did not know their adoptive parents' ethnic heritage (6.9%).
The participants' religious affiliations were primarily Protestant (43.4%), Catholic (21.1%), Christian (10.7%) or another religion (5.0%), although 18.9% of participants indicated no religion and 1.9% did not respond. Slightly more than half of participants indicated their adoptive parents' religion as Protestant (50.3), while others indicated their adoptive parents' religion as Catholic (25.8%), Christian (9.4%), Other (3.1%), Don't Know (1.3%), None (8.2%) and 1.9% did not respond.

Measures

The measure that was used in this research study was the Tennessee Self Concept Scale (TSCS) (Roid and Fitts, 1988). In addition, a background questionnaire was also included to provide participant demographics, background information, and narrative data.

Tennessee Self Concept Scale (TSCS)

The TSCS is a self-administered, paper and pencil test consisting of 100 self-descriptive items. Because the original format of the test was less than conducive to a mailout survey, the test was reprinted with the permission of the publisher (see Appendix C). The items were reprinted in a similar format to that of the computer-scored form of the TSCS, with the addition of the likert scale ratings added to the top of each page for easy reference by respondents.

The Total Score is considered to be the most important score on the TSCS (Roid & Fitts, 1988) and was the primary focus of this study. It reflects a person's overall level of self-concept. An individual with a high Total Score likes himself or herself, has high self-confidence and self esteem and acts accordingly. A person with a low score is doubtful about his or her self worth and and little self-confidence. He or she may often feel anxious, depressed, and/or unhappy (Roid & Fitts, 1988).
The Total Score is the total for 90 of the 100 items of the TSCS. These 90 items are also used to derive scores for five subscales of an "external" frame of reference (Physical, Moral-Ethical, Personal, Family, and Social) and three subscales of an "internal" frame (Identity, Self-Satisfaction, and Behaviour). Because of the overlapping of items, the Total Positive Score is highly correlated with these eight subscales and these subscales are also highly intercorrelated with each other. Correlations range between .41 and .96, most being within the .70 and .90 range. Scores for some of the subscales were considered for this study, but because of these high correlations, the primary focus was placed on the Total Positive Score.

In spite of these high intercorrelations, for this study, scores were derived for the Identity, Self-Satisfaction, and Family subscales. It was speculated that if there were any differences between the groups, they would most likely be reflected in the scores of these scales. The items which make up the Identity subscale are those that focus on "who I am;" the individual describes his or her basic identity as he or she perceives it. The Self-Satisfaction subscale focuses on "how I like myself" and how satisfied a person is with his or her perceived self image. And the Family subscale reflects the individual's feelings of adequacy, worth and value as a family member. It refers to the person's perception of self in relation to people around them. The Identity, and Self-Satisfaction subscales are made up of 30 items each, and the Family subscale is made up of 18 items.

In addition to the 90 items that make up the Total Score and its subscales, the TSCS also includes 10 other items which were derived from the L scale of the MMPI. The items make up the Self-Criticism scale of the TSCS which acts as both a measure of validity and as a measure of openness and capacity for self-criticism. The Distribution of Responses is another way of measuring the validity of the respondent's answers. It also measures how confident one is in how he or she says about himself or herself.
The Variability scales measure the amount of inconsistency from one area of a person’s self-concept to another. The Total Variability score represents the total amount of variability for the entire measure, whereas the Column Variability measures the amount of variability amongst the subscales of an "external" nature and Row Variabilities measures variability amongst the "internal" subscales. A high score indicates that there is little unity or integration and that one's self-concept is variable from one area to another. The Total Conflict scale also refers to the amount of confusion or contradiction there is in the person's self-perception. The higher the score on this scale, the more confused the person's self-perception. On the other hand, a person with a very low score may be trying to portray an overly positive self image.

In addition to these original 14 scales, the 1988 revision of the TSCS added measures for 15 additional scales. This study proposed to derive scores for 3 of these additional scales: the Personality Integration Scale, the Seeman Personality Integration Index, and the Psychological Harmony Scale. Before scoring the data of this study, the researcher learned that a new and revised version of the TSCS was due to be released. This new revision of the TSCS has dropped these 15 supplementary scales which were added to the 1988 revision. The revised TSCS and has gone back to its original format with 14 basic scales for three reasons. First, the empirical scales were developed and added to the TSCS as research scales but researchers have not shown enough interest in them and not enough information has been accumulated to validate their continued use. Second, since the TSCS was first developed, other tests have become available that focus on clinical psychopathology that are much better for measuring this. And third, with the addition of the empirical scales, the TSCS had reported scores for some possible 30 scales. Considering that the measure only consists of 100 items, it goes without saying that the correlations among these scales were very high. Therefore, the scales were not independent of each other so there was no assurance that they were measuring what they intended to measure (Warren, 1996).
This study has derived scores for only one of the three additional scales which it originally proposed to study. The Personality Integration Scale (PI) was used for this study but the Seeman Personality Integration Scale (SPII) and the Psychological Harmony Scale (PH) were dropped. Although the above information which was obtained from the publisher was a factor in the decision to exclude these scales from this study, there were also two other reasons. The first reason is specific to the SPII. The SPII suggests that a score be given for the amount of time that it took the respondent to answer the TSCS. This point was overlooked when selecting scales to be included in this study and a question on completion time was not included on the questionnaire. And second, given that the TSCS is dropping these scales it is unlikely that future research will include these scales and refer to the findings of this study. Therefore, eliminating these scales will not have a notable effect on future knowledge in this area.

**Background Questionnaire**

The background questionnaire (see Appendix B) requested information concerning demographic characteristics, such as gender, age, ethnicity, education level, employment, income, and religion. In addition, it also requested information regarding the participants' adoption. For example, it included questions regarding the age when participants began living with their adoptive families, their age when they were told of their adoption, and information regarding their relationship with their adoptive parents. Participants who had had contact with a birth relative were also asked to complete an additional section with requested information regarding the contact and the effect, if any, it had on their sense of self concept.

For the most part, the background questionnaire consisted of categories of data, some which were nominal, and participants checked off the categories that best applied to them. A few of the questions required participants to respond using a likert scale of
1 to 5, and one question asked participants to rank the given responses. Participants were also invited to share comments on their experiences and/or on any question in the questionnaires.

**Data Analyses**

The preliminary analyses for this study began with examining gender differences on the TSCS Total Score. A two-tailed t-test was used to compare the mean Total Scores of male to female participants of the study. Then, the data obtained from the background questionnaire was summarized for all participants using frequency distributions. These frequency distributions were then calculated for the individual reunion groups and Group 1 and Group 2 were compared on this background information. Most of the data from the background questionnaire was in categorical format, so before moving on to test the hypotheses for the study, Chi-square tests were used to assess the equivalency of these sample groups. Chi-square test is a test used to determine whether two frequency distributions differ significantly from one another. The Pearson values for Chi-square were used to compare Group 1 and Group 2 on categorical data derived from the background questionnaire.

Once the preliminary analyses were completed, analyses focused on the hypotheses. In cases where analysis required the comparison of more than two mean scores, analysis of variance (ANOVA) were performed. ANOVA is a statistical method which is used to determine whether mean scores on one or more factors differ significantly. When only two mean scores were compared, t-tests were used. For Hypothesis 1, a t-test was performed to assess differences between Group 1 and Group 2 on the Total Score, but for the other subscales that were examined for this hypothesis, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) were used. This test is similar to the t-test and the ANOVA in that it determines whether scores differ, however, this
test groups together scores on two or more dependent variables and calculates whether the sample groups differ on the particular "cluster" of dependent variables.

Because of the high intercorrelations among the subscales of the TSCS, two sets of MANOVAs were conducted to examine differences in mean scores between the groups. The first MANOVA included the Identity, Self-Satisfaction and Family subscales, and the second was performed for the Total Conflict, Total Variability, and Personality Integration scales. The correlations between the Self-Criticism Scale and the other scales were relatively low, so this scale was examined alone using a t-test.

The t-test, ANOVA, and MANOVA statistical tests each assume homogeneity of variances. Therefore, Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was conducted for each test. Homogeneity of variances was indicated in most cases. In cases when Levene's Test indicated significant differences in variance (p<.05), the sample sizes were considered. If the sample sizes were equal, then homogeneity of variances was assumed (Reichl, 1996). If they were not, then the t value was corrected for unequal variances.

There were six additional analyses conducted supplementary to the hypotheses tested. These analyses used either t-tests or ANOVA depending on how many factors of the variable were involved. For these analyses, the more conservative alpha level of p<.01 was set to limit the risk of Type I errors.

A final analysis was conducted to examine the relationship among various variables derived from the background questionnaire and the TSCS Total Score. For this analysis, a Spearman correlation was used. The Spearman corelation allows for comparison of relationships among nominal and continuous variables and, therefore, was appropriate for this study because the Total Score was a continuous variable and the variables from the background questionnaire were nominal.

The results of the analyses which were conducted are presented in the following chapter.
CHAPTER IV
Results

The data produced by this study was analyzed by computer using the statistical software package, SPSS for Windows, version 6.0. Each participant's responses to questions on the background questionnaire and on the TSCS were entered into the computer. Totals were obtained for each participant on the following scales of the TSCS: Total Positive Score, and eight subscales, including Identity, Self-Satisfaction, Behaviour, Physical Self, Moral-Ethical Self, Personal Self, Family Self, and Social Self; Self-Criticism; Distribution of Responses; Total Variability; Total Conflict; and the empirical scale, Personality Integration.

This chapter presents the results of each of the analyses which were performed. It begins by describing the preliminary analysis which were conducted prior to testing the hypotheses. The section on preliminary analyses includes the results of examination for gender differences on the TSCS, assessment of the responses on the background questionnaire, and analyses to establish the equivalence of the sample groups. The next section of this chapter deals with the hypotheses which were tested. The results of the analyses for each hypothesis are presented individually. And finally, the supplementary analyses which were conducted are described and the results are presented. As noted in Table 3.1, there were few respondents who were not searchers, so some of the analyses were based on searchers only. N values are indicated for each analysis.

Preliminary Analysis

Gender Differences

A 2-tailed t-test was conducted on all participants (N=159) to check for gender differences on the Total Score of the TSCS. The difference in mean scores between
male \( (n=32) \) (\( M=354.72; \ SD=41.21 \)) and female \( (n=124) \) (\( M=350.71; \ SD=42.61 \)) participants (missing cases=3) was nonsignificant (\( t(154)=.48; \ p=.63 \)). The mean scores for the male and female groups were both within the normal limits for the general population as reported for the TSCS. Consequently, for this study, the decision was made to group male and female participants into the same groups, rather than differentiating the groups based on gender.

**Descriptive Data**

In addition to the demographic information presented in the previous chapter, the background questionnaire also provided information on the participants' experiences of adoption, and search and reunion. In order to summarize this data, which was predominantly categorical or nominal in format, frequency distributions were calculated for the entire study sample \( (N=159) \). The results are as follows.

The background questionnaire asked participants how old they were when they began living with their adoptive families. The majority of participants were less than 12 months old (84.9%) when they began living with their adoptive families with more than half of them less than 3 months old (54.7%). Others were 1 to 2 years old (6.9%), 2 to 4 years old (5.0%), 5 years and older (1.3%), or they did not know (1.9%). Most adoptees were informed of their adoption by their adoptive parents (85.5%) and most were informed before the age of 14 (84.2%).

Using a likert scale, the participants of the study reported on their relationships with their adoptive parents. Overall, the study participants reported having positive relationships with their adoptive parents. At the time of the study, over half (55.3%) of the participants reported being very close or somewhat close with their adoptive parents, and 11.3% reported having casual, neither close nor distant relationships with them. Only 15.1% of participants reported having somewhat distant or very distant
relationships with their adoptive parents, and 18.2% reported that both their adoptive parents were deceased.

Participants also reported on their recollection of their relationship with their adoptive parents when they were teenagers and when they were children. Slightly less than half (49.7%) reported having somewhat close or very close relationships with their adoptive parents during their teen years, and approximately one-third (34.0%) reported somewhat distant or very distant relationships, and 16.4% reported casual, neither close nor distant relationships.

Perhaps most interesting, though, is the number of participants that reported having close or very close relationships with their adoptive parents when they were children. Over 71% of adoptees reported having close or very close relationships with their adoptive parents when they were a child. Of the others, 18.9% reported a casual, neither close nor distant relationship, and 9.4% reported a distant or very distant relationship. These numbers are very similar to those reported by Sachdev (1992) and will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

In order to further assess the adoptees' relationships with their adoptive parents, the background questionnaire went one step more and asked participants whether they had confided in their adoptive parents about their search and reunion. Almost two-thirds (63.5%) of participants reported that they had informed their adoptive parents of their search and/or reunion. Most of them (63.4%) informed their adoptive parents before they began searching, 27.7% informed them after they started the search but before they were reunited, and 8.9% informed their adoptive parents after the reunion. Of those that did not inform their adoptive parents, there were some participants whose adoptive parents had passed away before they initiated the search/reunion and they did not discuss it with them before they deceased. While some of the adoptees may have deferred their search and reunion until after their adoptive parents passed away,
certainly the majority did not, and in fact, most participants informed their adoptive parents of their decision to search and/or have contact with a birth relative.

The background questionnaire had three questions which were designed to assess the extent to which participants considered self concept or identity a factor in the process of search and reunion. The first question asked participants to check and/or rank (if more than one checked) the influences on their decision to search. "Identity" (74%), "curiosusity" (71%), and "a need to know" (62%) were among the influences most often checked by participants (see table 4.1). These reasons were also amongst the ones with the highest rank. "Identity" was ranked #1 by 28% of participants, "curioususity", 16%, and "a need to know" ranked as #1, by 25% of participants. The other influence which was highly ranked and most often included as one of the influences on the decision to search was "Medical information". This was checked by 77% of participants and ranked #1 by 26% of participants.

Table 4.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influences</th>
<th>Rank*</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#1</td>
<td>#2</td>
<td>#3</td>
<td>#4</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Need to Know</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouragement from Others</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning to have Children</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Frequencies for Ranks #1 to #4 are presented, although in some cases, respondents ranked items to 6 or 7.
Of the other two questions examining the influence of identity or self concept in the process of search and reunion, one requested a narrative response, of which the results will be discussed in the next chapter. The other question was limited to participants who had already had contact with a birth relative. This question asked participants whether the reunion had any effect on their sense of self concept or identity, and how. Of those respondents who had contact (n=84; missing cases=1), 88% said that their self concept had been affected, and approximately 11% said it had not. Furthermore, of those who responded that the search and reunion did effect their self concept, 90.5% of them said the effect had been positive, 5.4% said it had been negative, and 4.1% did not respond (see table 4.2).

Table 4.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Freq.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Cum. %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response omitted</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reunion has had no effect on sense of self-concept or identity.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reunion has had an effect on sense of self-concept or identity.</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>88.1</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The effect on self-concept *

| has been positive                                      | 67    | 90.5 | 90.5   |
| has been negative                                      | 4     | 5.4  | 95.9   |
| Response omitted                                       | 3     | 4.1  | 100%   |
|                                                       | 74    | 100% |        |

* n=74 (respondents who reported reunion had an effect on sense of self-concept or identity)

There was one section of the background questionnaire that was specific to participants who had experienced contact with a birth relative (n=84; missing cases=1).
This section asked questions regarding who they had contact with, when the contact was made, and the amount of contact. Almost 62% of respondents were first reunited with their birth mother, 7.1% first with their birth father, 16.7% with a birth sibling, and 14.3 with another birth relative. Less than 5% of participants had made contact within the last 3 months, 6.9% within 3 to 6 months, 6.9% within 6 to 12 months, 9.4% within 12 to 24 months, 15.1% within 2 to 5 years, and 10.1% made contact more than 5 years ago. Most people's first contact was by phone (63.1%), or by letter (30.9%), and only 6% of first contacts were in person. Nevertheless, most people met in person within a month after the first contact (51.2%), within a year (77.4%), or within 2 years (85.7%). At the time of the study, less than 15% of respondents had not met in person yet. About 40% of respondents lived less than a 5 hour drive away from the person they first had contact with, another 49% lived more than a five hour drive away, either in the same province/state, a different province/state, or another country. Less than 11% of respondents lived in the same town/city as the person they searched for. The majority of respondents had contact with the person they searched for weekly (21.4%), monthly (36.9%), or every few months (23.8%). Less than 2% of people had daily contact, 6% yearly or on special occasions, and about 11% had no contact with this person. In addition to the person they searched for and first had contact with, most participants had also had contact with other birth relatives, including birth siblings (70.2%), birth grandparents (23.8%), birth father (27.4%), birth mother (16.6%), and/or other birth relatives (54.8%).

One of the final questions on the background questionnaire section for participants who had a reunion, asked them, knowing what they now knew, would they do it again? Over 95% of respondents indicated that they would search again, and 89.3% said they would have a reunion. Less than 2% indicated that they would not search nor would they have a reunion. The remaining participants did not respond
(n=3 did not respond to searching again; n=8 did not respond to having a reunion again).

**Groups for Analyses**

This study intended to make comparisons between four groups of adoptees. Group 1 (searchers, post-reunion) were adoptees who completed a search and had contact with a birth relative. Group 2 (searchers, pre-reunion) were adoptees who were either in the process of searching or had completed a search and had not had contact with a birth relative. Group 3 (nonsearchers, post-reunion) were adoptees who did not search but who experienced a reunion because a birth relative searched for them. And Group 4 (nonsearchers, pre-reunion) were those who had not searched and had not had contact with a birth relative. There were very few respondents to the study who identified themselves as nonsearchers. This resulted in a limited number of participants for Group 3 (n=6) and Group 4 (n=5). Because of these small sample sizes, the study did not complete analyses which involved the nonsearchers' groups. Analyses for the study focused on pre- and post-reunion searchers, Group 1 (n=79) and Group 2 (n=69) only.

**Equivalence of the Sample Groups.** Prior to testing the hypotheses, analyses were performed to investigate whether the participant groups were comparable. Group 1 and Group 2 were compared to each other on demographic characteristics using chi-square tests. The results of these analyses are reported in Table 4.3. The sample groups were similar in almost all respects, including gender, education level, country of residence, residence in urban/rural areas, and income levels. In addition, Group 1 and Group 2 were similar in the ethnic heritages of participants and of their adoptive parents. The only exception was in the number of participants who identified their ethnic heritage as European. There was a significant difference between Group 1 and Group 2 in the number of participants who identified "European" as at least one of their
ethnic heritages; however, both groups were predominantly made up of people of European heritage. The groups were similar in all other ethnicities and in those of their adoptive parents.

Table 4.3

Chi-Square Tests of Demographic Similarities Between Group 1 (n=79) and Group 2 (n=69)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \chi^2(1) = 0.0008, p = .98 \]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>19-24</th>
<th>25-29</th>
<th>30-39</th>
<th>40-49</th>
<th>50-59</th>
<th>60 &amp; over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \chi^2(5) = 17.32, p = .004 \]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>High School</th>
<th>Vocational Training</th>
<th>Some College or Univ.</th>
<th>University Grad. or Post-Graduate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \chi^2(3) = 1.47, p = .69 \]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Professional or Semi-Pro.</th>
<th>Clerical/ Sales/ Technician</th>
<th>Skilled or Semi-skilled</th>
<th>Self-Employed</th>
<th>Homemaker</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Unemployed</th>
<th>Retired</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \chi^2(1) = 0.71, \chi^2(1) = 2.04, \chi^2(1) = 6.34, \chi^2(1) = 1.80, \chi^2(1) = 2.67, \chi^2(1) = 1.20, \chi^2(1) = 2.32, \chi^2(1) = 1.59 \]

\[ p = .40, \chi^2(1) = .15, \chi^2(1) = .01, \chi^2(1) = .18, \chi^2(1) = .10, \chi^2(1) = .27, \chi^2(1) = .13, \chi^2(1) = .21 \]

(Note: Some participants checked more than one category.)

(table continues)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>&lt;12,000</th>
<th>12,000 – 19,999</th>
<th>20,000 – 34,999</th>
<th>35,000 – 49,999</th>
<th>50,000 – 59,999</th>
<th>60,000 +</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(\chi^2(5) = 6.29, p = .28\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Residence</th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(\chi^2(1) = 0.28, p = .59\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Suburban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(\chi^2(2) = 2.96, p = .23\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Heritage</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
<th>Aboriginal</th>
<th>European</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>African</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(\chi^2(1) = 0.69, .96, 4.22, 2.32, 0.77, 1.77, 0.04\)

\(p = .41, .33, .04, .13, .38, .18, .84\)

(Note: Some participants checked more than one category.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Heritage of Adoptive Parents</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
<th>Aboriginal</th>
<th>European</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>African</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(\chi^2(1) = 1.54, 0.49, 0.12, 2.32, 0.01, 0.88, 0.02\)

\(p = .25, .48, .75, .13, .92, .35, .89\)

(Note: Some participants checked more than one category.)

(table continues)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship Status</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Divorced</th>
<th>Widowed</th>
<th>Single/ Never Married</th>
<th>Living with Sig. Other</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2(5) = 11.14, p = .05$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have Children</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2(1) = 16.29, p = .0001$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Began Living with Adoptive Family</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
<th>&lt;3 mths</th>
<th>3-6 mths</th>
<th>6-12 mths</th>
<th>1-2 yrs</th>
<th>2-4 yrs</th>
<th>5 yrs +</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2(6) = 13.39, p = .04$

Regarding the employment of participants, the two groups were again very similar. The only difference was that approximately 16% of participants in Group 2 indicated "skilled or semi-skilled manual labour" as their current employment (note: participants checked all categories that applied, and may have checked more than one type of employment). Whereas, less than 4% of participants in Group 1 indicated "skilled or semi-skilled manual labour" to describe their current employment.

There were, however, some more obvious demographic differences between the two groups. First, a chi-square test indicated significant differences between the two groups in the ages of the participants. The most apparent reason for the difference between the groups was that Group 2 had twice as many people aged 25 to 29, and Group 1 had three times more people aged 40 to 49. Furthermore, Group 2 had no
participants who were over age 60. The groups were fairly similar in representation of the other age categories. Second, there was also a difference between the groups in participants' relationship status. This may be due to the fact that Group 1 had more people who were married, and more who were widowed, and Group 2 had more people who were living with a significant other and people who identified themselves as "single/never married." The third, and perhaps the most apparent difference between Group 1 and Group 2 was in the number of participants who had children. Approximately 75% of the participants in Group 1 had children, whereas only 42% of participants in Group 2 had children. This difference was significant at p<.001 level. These differences may be a reflection of the distribution of ages of participants in each group. That is, because 45% of the participants in Group 2 were under the age of 30, compared to only 24% in Group 1, it is not surprising that Group 2 had fewer participants who were married and also fewer who had children.

Another difference between Group 1 and Group 2 had to do with the age in which participants began living with their adoptive families. A chi-square test indicated a significant difference between the groups on this variable. The number of participants who began living with their adoptive families before the age of 3 months were equally distributed between Group 1 and Group 2, however, there were differences between the groups in the number of participants who were adopted at other ages. For example, approximately 6% (n=9) of the participants were over the age of 2 years when they began living with their adoptive parents. All but one of these participants were in Group 1. This is not surprising because it was likely that these people remembered being adopted and may have had more information about their birth families that made searching for them easier than those who were adopted younger.

Chi-square tests were also conducted between Group 1 and Group 2 to examine their similarity in regards to the importance of various influences on their decisions to
search (see Table 4.4). The results indicated that medical information, identity, curiosity, and a need to know were the influences most highly and most often ranked by participants in both groups. More people in Group 1 ranked "a need to know" as the most important influence on their decision to search, whereas, Group 2's ranking on "a need to know" was more evenly distributed.

Table 4.4
Chi Square Tests of Similarities between Group 1 (n=79) and Group 2 (n=69) on the Most Important Influences on the Decision to Search

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medical Information</th>
<th>Ranks</th>
<th>#1</th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#3</th>
<th>#4</th>
<th>#5</th>
<th>#6</th>
<th>No Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( \chi^2(6) = 3.76, p = .71 \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identity</th>
<th>Ranks</th>
<th>#1</th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#3</th>
<th>#4</th>
<th>#5</th>
<th>#6</th>
<th>No Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( \chi^2(5) = 5.27, p = .38 \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curiosity</th>
<th>Ranks</th>
<th>#1</th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#3</th>
<th>#4</th>
<th>#5</th>
<th>#6</th>
<th>No Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( \chi^2(6) = 5.14, p = .53 \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A Need to Know</th>
<th>Ranks</th>
<th>#1</th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#3</th>
<th>#4</th>
<th>#5</th>
<th>#6</th>
<th>No Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( \chi^2(6) = 13.08, p = .04 \)

(table continues)
Encouragement from Others

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranks</th>
<th>#1</th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#3</th>
<th>#4</th>
<th>#5</th>
<th>#6</th>
<th>No Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2(6) = 4.15, p = .66$

Planning to Have Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranks</th>
<th>#1</th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#3</th>
<th>#4</th>
<th>#5</th>
<th>#6</th>
<th>No Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2(6) = 13.08, p = .04$

Other Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranks</th>
<th>#1</th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#3</th>
<th>#4</th>
<th>#5</th>
<th>#6</th>
<th>#7</th>
<th>No Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2(7) = 8.11, p = .32$

Hypothesis 1

The primary hypothesis predicted that adoptees who have experienced a reunion with a birth relative (Group 1) would score more positively on the Tennessee Self Concept Scale than those adoptees who were searching but had not experienced a reunion with a birth relative (Group 2). This hypothesis was tested by comparing the groups' scores on the TSCS Total Score. In addition, scores were also derived and compared for the Identity, Self Satisfaction, and Family subscales, and the Self Criticism, Total Variability, Total Conflict, and Personality Integration scales.
Total Score

The Total Score is the overall measure of self-concept as measured by the TSCS. It was predicted that Group 1 would score more positively on the Total Score than Group 2. A 1-tailed t-test for independent samples revealed no significant difference between the Total Score means of Group 1 (M=354.68; SD=41.43) and Group 2 (M=348.17; SD=44.18), (t(146)=0.92, p=.17) (Table 4.1). In addition, the mean scores for both groups were very close to, and slightly higher than, the norm reported for the TSCS Total Score (M=345.57; SD=30.70).

Table 4.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group 1 (n=79)</th>
<th>Group 2 (n=69)</th>
<th>t value (146)</th>
<th>p*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>354.6848</td>
<td>348.1739</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>41.43</td>
<td>44.177</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 1-tailed t-test

The results do not support the hypothesis that adoptees who have experienced a reunion with a birth relative will score higher on a measure of self concept, the TSCS, than adoptees who have not experienced a reunion. In other words, there is no evidence of a difference in Total Scores between adoptees who have experienced a reunion and those who have not. Also, both Group 1 and Group 2 scored well within the normal limits reported for the TSCS Total Score.

Other Scales Tested for Hypothesis 1

In addition to the above t-test, two Multivariate Analysis of Variances (MANOVA) were also conducted to test Hypothesis 1. The first MANOVA compared Group 1's and
Group 2's scores on the Identity, Self-Satisfaction, and Family subscales. The second compared the groups' scores on the Total Conflict, Total Variability, and Personality Integration Scales. Contrary to expectation, significant differences were not found between Group 1 and Group 2 on any of these TSCS scales.

**Identity, Self-Satisfaction, and Family Subscales.** It was expected that the Group 1's mean scores on these subscales would be significantly higher than Group 2's mean scores. A Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) between Group 1's and Group 2's means on these subscales failed to meet significance levels (E(3)=.94, p=.42). This is not surprising considering these subscales are highly correlated with the Total Score. The means, standard deviations and t scores for each of these subscales are reported in Table 4.6. Again, the mean scores for Group 1 and Group 2 on each of these subscales fell well within the TSCS reported normal limits (TSCS norm means and standard deviations are reported in italics in Table 4.6).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group 1 (n=79)</th>
<th>Group 2 (n=69)</th>
<th>TSCS Norm Group (n=626)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>M=124.71</td>
<td>M=124.15</td>
<td>M=127.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD=13.62</td>
<td>SD=14.27</td>
<td>SD=9.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>t(146)=.06</td>
<td>p=.81</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Satisfaction</td>
<td>M=113.78</td>
<td>M=111.55</td>
<td>M=103.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD=16.89</td>
<td>SD=17.42</td>
<td>SD=13.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>t(146)=.62</td>
<td>p=.43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table continues)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group 1 (n=79)</th>
<th>Group 2 (n=69)</th>
<th>TSCS Norm Group (n=626)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>$M=70.90$</td>
<td>$M=68.81$</td>
<td>$M=70.83$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$SD=9.40$</td>
<td>$SD=11.30$</td>
<td>$SD=8.43$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$t(146)=1.51$</td>
<td>$p=.22$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall $F(1, 146)=0.94$, $p=.42$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Self-Criticism (SC).** It was expected that Group 1 would score more positively than Group 2 on the Self-Criticism Scale. The mean scores on the Self Criticism Scale of the TSCS were very similar between Group 1 ($M=32.73$; $SD=6.18$) and Group 2 ($M=32.41$; $SD=6.35$). These means were slightly lower than the TSCS reported norms ($M=35.54$; $SD=6.70$). Both Group 1's and Group 2's means were within 1 SD of the TSCS's norm mean. A 1-tailed t-test indicated no significant difference between the Self Criticism score of Group 1 and Group 2 ($t(146)=0.32$, $p=.38$).

**Total Conflict (TOT C), Total Variability (V TOT), Personality Integration (PI).** A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to compare the mean scores of Group 1 and Group 2 on each of these scales. It was expected that Group 1 would score significantly more positively than Group 2 on each of these scales. A low score (but not an extremely low score) is more positive than a high score on the Total Conflict Scale (TOT C), therefore, it was expected that Group 1 would score lower, than Group 2 on this scale. It was also expected that Group 1 would score more positively than Group 2 on the Total Variability Scale (V TOT). Like the TOT C scale, a low V TOT score (but not an extremely low score) is more positive than a high score because a person whose self-concept is consistent from area of self to another, would have a low variability score on the TSCS. Therefore, it was expected that Group 1 would score lower than Group 2 on this scale. The Personality Integration Scale (PI) differentiates...
"well-adjusted, high-functioning, ('personality integrated') individuals" from other groups of individuals (Roid & Fitts, 1991, p. 5). A high score on this scale is more positive than a low score, so it was expected that Group 1 would score higher on this scale than Group 2. The multivariate analysis of variance indicated no significant differences between the groups on any of these scales. The results of the MANOVA are presented below in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7
Means, Standard Deviations and t Values for Group 1 and Group 2 on the Total Conflict, Total Variability and Personality Integration Scales of the TSCS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group 1 (n=79)</th>
<th>Group 2 (n=69)</th>
<th>TSCS Norm Group (n=626)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTC</td>
<td>M=29.95</td>
<td>M=30.46</td>
<td>M=30.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD=8.06</td>
<td>SD=8.34</td>
<td>SD=8.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>t(146)=0.11</td>
<td>P= .74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V TOT</td>
<td>M=41.29</td>
<td>M=44.06</td>
<td>M=48.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD=11.18</td>
<td>SD=13.93</td>
<td>SD=12.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>t(146)=1.79</td>
<td>P= .18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PI</td>
<td>M=9.91</td>
<td>M=9.75</td>
<td>M=10.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD=4.03</td>
<td>SD=3.75</td>
<td>SD=3.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>t(146)=.06</td>
<td>P= .81</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall F(1, 146) = 0.64, P= .59

Contrary to expectation, adoptees in Group 1 did not score significantly more positively than adoptees in Group 2 on any of the TSCS scales tested. Therefore,
Hypothesis 1 was rejected and the null hypothesis was accepted. As is obvious from the results presented above, there was no indication that adoptees who had experienced a reunion with a birth relative scored any more positively on the TSCS than adoptees who were searching but had not experienced a reunion. Additionally, it was also obvious that adoptees in this study, as a group, did not score outside the normal limits on any of the TSCS scales. It was expected that scores on the TSCS would be lower for adoptees seeking reunions than for the general population when compared to the general population norms reported for the Tennessee Self Concept Scale. While there were individual scores on every scale that fell outside the reported norms, as a whole, the mean scores for all respondents (N=159), and for each group, were all within the normal limits reported for the TSCS.

Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis predicted that adoptees who initiated the search for their birth relative(s) (Group 1: searchers, post-reunion; and Group 2: searchers, pre-reunion) would score lower on the Tennessee Self Concept Scale than those adoptees who did not initiate the search for their birth relative(s) (Group 3: nonsearchers, post-reunion; and Group 4: nonsearchers, pre-reunion). The difference in the number of searching versus nonsearching adoptees who responded to the study made it impossible to complete this analysis. The differences in the sizes between Group 1 (searchers, post-reunion) (n=79) and Group 3 (nonsearchers, post-reunion) (n=6), and between Group 2 (searchers, pre-reunion) (n=69) and Group 4 (nonsearchers, pre-reunion) (n=5) did not allow for a reliable analysis. Nevertheless, means and standard deviations were derived for each group. They are presented in Table 4.8. Although it is impossible to make any reliable conclusions based on these outcomes, strictly looking at these group means and standard deviations, it does appear that the groups
are very similar. All means are very close to one another with similar standard deviations, and all are within the normal limits reported for the TSCS.

Table 4.8

Means and Standard Deviations for Each Group on Total Score and other TSCS Scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Post-Reunion</th>
<th>Pre-Reunion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Searchers (n=79)</td>
<td>Nonsearchers (n=6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Score M</td>
<td>354.68</td>
<td>353.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>41.43</td>
<td>27.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity M</td>
<td>124.71</td>
<td>126.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>13.62</td>
<td>9.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Satis M</td>
<td>113.77</td>
<td>110.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>16.89</td>
<td>11.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family M</td>
<td>70.90</td>
<td>68.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>9.40</td>
<td>6.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC M</td>
<td>32.73</td>
<td>32.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>6.18</td>
<td>7.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOT C M</td>
<td>29.90</td>
<td>27.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>8.09</td>
<td>9.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V TOT M</td>
<td>41.29</td>
<td>43.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>11.18</td>
<td>9.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PI M</td>
<td>9.91</td>
<td>9.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 predicted that adoptees who reported that their hopes and expectations for the search and reunion were "satisfied", or "very satisfied" would score more positively on the Tennessee Self Concept Scale, Total Score, than those adoptees who reported "mixed," "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied." To test this hypothesis, a one-way ANOVA was performed. Respondents who reported that they had experienced a reunion, Groups 1 and 3 combined (n=85; missing cases=1; therefore, n=84), were divided into 3 groups based on how satisfied they were with the results of the reunion. Participants in Group 2 and in Group 4 were people who had not yet experienced a reunion, therefore, Group 2 and Group 4 were not included in this analysis.

The first group for this analysis consisted of respondents who reported that the search and reunion had "very satisfied" their hopes and expectations so far (n=31). The second group was those respondents who reported the search and reunion had "satisfied" their hopes and expectations so far (n=26); and because there were so few participants who reported being dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied, the third group incorporated all respondents who reported the reunion either "neutral/mixed," "dissatisfied," or "very dissatisfied" (n=27) their hopes and expectations. The results of the one-way ANOVA indicated a significant difference in the Total Scores between the "very satisfied" group ($M=367.58$, $SD=38.59$) and the "mixed, dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied" group ($M=341.52$, $SD=37.22$) ($F(2, 81)=4.56$, $p=.01$). The mean of the second group, participants who were "satisfied" ($M=355.77$, $SD=40.57$) fell between the mean of the "very satisfied" group and the "mixed, dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied" group and was not significantly different than the others.

The results are in the expected direction, even though they are all within the normal limits reported for the TSCS, yet, they only partially support the hypothesis.
That is, the results support the hypothesis that adoptees who reported being "very satisfied" scored significantly higher on the TSCS Total Score than those adoptees who reported feelings that were either "neutral/mixed," "dissatisfied," or "very dissatisfied." However, the results did not support the hypothesis that adoptees who report that the results "satisfied" their hopes and expectations would score higher than those who reported "neutral/mixed," "dissatisfied," or "very dissatisfied."

**Hypothesis 4**

The same "satisfaction" groups that were analyzed for Hypothesis 3 were also considered for Hypothesis 4. It was expected that adoptees who reported that their hopes and expectations for the search and reunion were "satisfied", or "very satisfied" would also report a positive effect on their sense of self concept or identity. An overwhelming number of people (88.1%) reported that the search and reunion had an effect on their sense of self concept or identity compared to 10.7% who reported no effect. Of those who reported that the search and reunion had an effect, only 5.4% reported that the effect had been negative, whereas 90.5% reported the effect on their self concept had been positive (4.1% did not respond). Because so few people reported that the search and reunion had a negative effect, no statistical analyses was performed to test this hypothesis.

This researcher's impression was that the respondents who reported a negative effect also reported that the search and reunion had not satisfied their hopes and expectations. The comments made by these respondents generally indicated that the search and reunion had turned out differently than they had expected, or that their expectations had not been fulfilled. More specifically, these respondents made comments indicating that they did not get the information and help that they had wanted during their search, or that they didn't get the information they wanted or response they
expected from their birth relatives once they had contact. This is discussed in more
detail, and examples of respondents' comments are given, in Chapter 5.

Comparison of these respondents who reported a negative effect indicated that
they were all female between the ages of 30 and 49, married or living with a significant
other and most had children. All but one had experienced the reunion within the last
year and all lived at least a 5 hour drive away from their birth relative. Most
interestingly though, is that most of these respondents reported that they did not know
their ethnic heritage. Less than 8% of the total sample of respondents who had a
reunion (n=85) reported that they did not know their ethnic heritage, yet, 50% of the
respondents who reported a negative effect on their self concept stated that they did
not know their ethnic heritage.

**Hypothesis 5**

The fifth hypothesis predicted that adoptees who reported a positive effect on
their sense of self concept or identity would score higher on the TSCS, Total Score
than those who report a negative effect or no effect. This hypothesis was intended to
test whether participants' subjective claims of a positive effect on their self concept
were in fact substantiated by an objective measure. Again, because of the difference in
the numbers of participants who reported a positive effect (n=67) and those that
reported a negative effect (n=4) and no effect (n=9), no analysis could be completed.

**Supplementary Analyses**

Additional analyses were conducted to investigate whether there were any
significant differences on the TSCS Total Score based on variables, such as age,
childhood relationship with adoptive parents, present relationship with adoptive
parents, age when began living with adoptive family, and identity as an influence to search. In addition, Spearman Correlation Coefficients were computed among some of the variables derived from the background questionnaire section dealing specifically with the reunion and the TSCS Total Score. The results of each of these analyses are presented below.

**Age and TSCS Total Score**

As was discussed in Chapter Two, most theorists agree that self-concept is dynamic and changes throughout the life span. Yet, there may be particular life stages, such as adolescence, where the task of identity development is at the forefront. For this reason, the entire study sample of participants (N=159) were divided into six groups based on age and their mean Total Scores were compared to see whether there were any differences between them on their mean self-concept scores. The first group included participants aged 19 to 24 (n=12) (M=326.33, SD=49.50), the second, participants aged 25 to 29 (n=42) (M=340.29, SD=47.30), the third, those aged 30 to 39 (n=51) (M=355.27, SD=38.18), the fourth group, participants aged 40 to 49 (n=33) (M=356.97, SD=35.13), group five, participants aged 50 to 59 (n=16) (M=357.88, SD=41.25), and the last group was made up of participants aged 60 and over (n=5) (M=397.00, SD=14.75). A one-way ANOVA was conducted and significant differences in the mean Total Scores were indicated between group 6 and groups 1 and 2 (p=.01). That is, the mean score for participants aged 60 and over was significantly higher than the mean scores for participants in the 19 to 24 age group and for participants in the 25 to 29 age group.

Although the number of participants in each of these groups was too small to draw reliable conclusions, an interesting trend was noted. Analysis of the means of all six age groups indicated a tendency for the means to increase as age increased. This is illustrated in Figure 1 below.
Aumend and Barrett (1984) suggest that adoptees who search for birth relatives have more negative attitudes towards their adoptive parents and more negative self-concepts. The present study attempted to assess the Total Score means in relation to participants' current and childhood relationships with their adoptive parents. For these analyses, participants were divided into two groups. Participants who scored equal to or above the median for all participants (N=159) on the TSCS Total Score (Mdn=356.00) were placed in one group (n=81), and participants whose Total Score was below the median were placed in another group (n=78). These two groups were then compared on how they rated their childhood relationships (see Table 4.9) and their current relationships with their adoptive parents (see Table 4.10). In both cases, a likert scale of 1 to 5 was used for ratings, where 1 indicated "very close" and 5 indicated "very distant."

### Table 4.9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Score &gt; = 356 (n=81)</th>
<th>Total Score &lt; 356 (n=78)</th>
<th>t value (157)</th>
<th>p*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p* 2-tailed t-test
A two-tailed t-test indicated a significant difference in how these two groups rated their childhood relationships ($t=-3.63, p<.001$). The group of participants with Total Scores equal to or above the median ranked their childhood relationship with their adoptive parents significantly more positively than those participants with Total Scores below the median. Nevertheless, both groups rated their childhood relationships with their adoptive parents quite positively. The average of ratings for the first group fell about halfway between "very close", and "somewhat close", and the average rating for the second group was between "somewhat close" and "casual, neither close nor distant".

For the analysis regarding participants' current relationship with their adoptive parents, participants who had at least one adoptive parent living, were divided into two groups: Those who scored equal to or above the median for all participants ($N=159$) on the TSCS Total Score ($Md=356.00$) were placed in one group ($n=64$), and participants whose Total Score was below the median were placed in another group ($n=66$). These two groups were then compared on how they rated their current relationships with their adoptive parents (see Table 4.10).

Table 4.10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Relationship with Adoptive Parents and TSCS Total Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Score $\geq$ 356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 2-tailed t-test

The results of the two-tailed t-test indicated a significant difference between these two groups ($t(128)=-2.86, p=.005$). Similar to above, the group of participants
with Total Scores equal to or above the median ranked their current relationship with their adoptive parent(s) significantly more positively than those participants with Total Scores below the median. Nevertheless, both groups rated their current relationships with their adoptive parents quite positively. The average of ratings for the first group fell between "very close", and "somewhat close", and the average rating for the second group was about halfway between "somewhat close" and "casual, neither close nor distant".

Age when Began Living with Adoptive Family and TSCS Total Score

An analysis was conducted comparing the Total Scores of participants based on when they began living with their adopted families. Brodzinsky et. al. (1992) and Ames (1996) have suggested that children adopted older, after they have developed attachments to other caregivers, may have more difficulty resolving the tasks related to identity. Therefore, this study was interested in comparing the self-concept scores between groups of adoptees who had been adopted at different ages.

For this analyses, each participant was placed in one of three groups, depending on how old they were when they began living with their adoptive families. The first group included participants who were less than 3 months old when they began living with their adoptive families (n=87) (M=355.83, SD=40.23) and the second group was made up of participants who were 3 to 12 months old (n=48) (M=343.73, SD=46.40). There were fewer participants who were in the older groups, so to make the size of the groups more equal, the third group incorporated all groups of participants who began living with their adoptive families when they were more than 12 months old (n=21) (M=348.10, SD=42.28). About half of the people in this final group were between 1 and 2 years old when they began living with their adoptive families, about 40% were 2 to 4 years old, and the remaining were 5 years old and older. A one-
way ANOVA was conducted and indicated no significant difference between the mean Total Scores of these three groups ($F(2, 153)=1.31; p=.27$).

Identity as an Influence on the Decision to Search and TSCS Total Score

As previously discussed, various researchers have reported that adoptees search for reasons related to identity and a "negative self image" (Triseliotis, 1973; Sorosky et. al., 1975; Sachdev, 1992). The final analysis considered whether there were significant differences between participants' self-concept scores and how they ranked identity as an influence on their decision to search and/or have a reunion with a birth relative. For this analysis, participants were again divided into two groups: the first group ($n=81$) included participants whose Total Score was equal to or above the median Total Score ($M=356$), and the second group ($n=78$) included participants who scores were below the median. A two-tailed $t$-test indicated no significant difference between the first group ($M=3.21, SD=2.08$) and the second group ($M=3.03, SD=1.84$) on the ranks they gave to identity as an influence on their decision ($t(157)=0.59, p=.56$). In other words, the group scoring higher on the TSCS did not rank identity as an influence on their decision to search any differently than the group scoring lower on the TSCS.

Correlation Among Variables from Background Questionnaire and TSCS Total Score

Spearman correlation coefficients were derived among the TSCS Total Score, time since first contact with birth relative searched for, amount of current contact with birth relative, distance from birth relative, and amount of time between first contact and meeting in person. The results are presented below in Table 4.5. Except for the TSCS Total Score, all variables were derived from the background questionnaire section dealing with reunion. This section was completed only by respondents who had completed a search and had contact with a birth relative (Group 1: searchers, post-
reunion group; \(n=79\) or whose birth relative searched for them and they had contact (Group 3: nonsearchers, post-reunion group; \(n=6\)) (\(n=85\), missing cases=1, therefore \(n=84\)).

Table 4.11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spearman Correlation Coefficients for TSCS Total Score and Variables Derived from Background Questionnaire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. TSCS Total Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(r_s=0.23^*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(^<em>p&lt;.05); (^{<strong>}p&lt;.01); (^{</strong></em>}p&lt;.001)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of the Spearman correlational analysis indicate a positive relationship between TSCS Total Score and the length of time since first contact, and a negative relationship between TSCS Total Score and amount of time between first contact and meeting in person. In other words, TSCS scores increased as the length of time since the reunion increased, and TSCS scores decreased as the amount of time between the initial contact and first meeting in person increased. A positive correlation was also indicated between the amount of time between the first contact and meeting in person, and distance from birth relative. This suggests that, the further away people were from one another, the longer it took for them to meet in person after they first made contact. The results of the correlational analysis also suggest that the more time it took for people to meet in person, and the more time that had passed since the reunion, the less frequent the current contact. In addition, it seems that people who
made contact more recently took more time between the initial contact and meeting in person. These results will be described and discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

Summary

TSCS Total Scores were calculated for each respondent as were scores for the Identity, Family, Self Satisfaction, Self Criticism, Total Conflict, Total Variability and Personality Integration subscales. Contrary to the hypothesis, no significant differences were found on any of these scales between the mean scores of adoptees who had experienced a reunion (Group 1) and those who were searching but had not had contact yet (Group 2). However, a significant difference was found between groups of respondents who had experienced a reunion based on how satisfied they were with the reunion. Although the majority of respondents reported that the search and reunion had "satisfied" or "very satisfied" their hopes and expectations, the mean Total Score for respondents who reported being "very satisfied" was significantly higher than the mean score for the group of respondents who reported "neutral/mixed", "dissatisfied", or "very dissatisfied".

Some significant differences were also found in analyses which were supplementary to the hypotheses tested. First, a significant difference was found on the TSCS Total Score between the group of respondents over the age of 60 and those aged 19 to 24 and those aged 25 to 29. Although the number of participants in each of these groups was too small to draw reliable conclusions, the trend was for scores to increase as age increased. Second, it was found that overall, participants rated their relationships with their adoptive parents quite positively. However, respondents who scored equal to or above the median Total Score rated their childhood relationship and their current relationship with their adoptive parent(s) higher than participants who
scored below the median on the TSCS Total Score. And third, analysis comparing the mean Total Scores of participants who were less than 3 months old when they began living with their adoptive families to those that were 3 to 24 months old, also indicated a significant difference, with those who were less than 3 months old scoring significantly higher.

The information obtained from the background questionnaire was summarized overall, for all participants, and separately comparing Group 1 and Group 2. Group 1 and Group 2 were fairly similar in demographic characteristics with a few exceptions, such as the age, relationship status, and the age which they began living with their adoptive families. Generally, Group 2 included younger respondents, more who did not have children and were not in relationships, and more respondents who began living with their adoptive families at a younger age. The background questionnaire was also summarized by correlating TSCS Totals Scores and some of the variables derived from the background questionnaire regarding contact. These correlations and the results of all analyses performed will be discussed in further detail in the following chapter.
The primary aim of this study was to examine whether adoptees who had experienced a reunion with a birth relative would score more positively on a measure of self-concept than adoptees who had not experienced a reunion. The study intended to compare searching pre-reunion and post-reunion adoptees and nonsearching pre-reunion and post-reunion adoptees. Unfortunately, there were few respondents who identified themselves as nonsearchers, so analyses of the hypotheses focused on searching adoptees only. However, respondents who indicated they were nonsearchers were included in some of the preliminary and supplementary analyses.

Contrary to expectation, the results of the study indicated no differences on self-concept scores between reunited and searching adoptees. That is, the self concept scores of adoptees who experienced a reunion were no different than those who were still searching and awaiting a reunion. In addition, the mean scores of adoptees in this study were within the limits reported for TSCS norms for the general population. This would seem to indicate that as a group, adoptees do not differ in self concept from the general population and also that reunions do not influence the self concept of adult adoptees.

There is only one other study in the literature that has used a standardized measure to compare the self concept of adoptees who have experienced a reunion to those that have not. Like the present study, Aumend and Barrett (1984) tested adoptees that were affiliated with search groups or adoption agencies. They also used the same measure used in the present study, the TSCS. Aumend and Barrett (1984) compared 19 pre-reunion and 14 post-reunion adoptees and found no significant differences in self concept between these groups. Unlike the present study, Aumend and Barrett also tested 47 adoptees who identified themselves as nonsearchers in
addition to the 66 adoptees who identified themselves as searchers. Although there were differences between them, the majority of adoptees in their study scored above the mean reported for the general population. Aumend and Barrett (1984) concluded that the adoptees in their study did not have negative self-concepts and, moreover, that reunions did not make a significant difference to the self concept of adoptees.

The findings of the present study are similar to those of Aumend and Barrett (1984) and seem to support their findings and those of other researchers (Stein & Hoopes, 1985; Norvell & Guy, 1977; Aumend & Barrett, 1984) that suggest that adoptees may not be more vulnerable to identity conflicts and do not need information about their birth families in order to develop a positive self-concept.

Nevertheless, in the present study, the information obtained from the standardized measure of self-concept does not match the participants' self-perceptions and experiences reported in the background questionnaire. The self-reports of the participants indicated that the majority of the respondents were motivated to search for reasons related to identity, and over 88% of the adoptees who had experienced a reunion reported that it did have an effect on their self-concept. For example, regarding his expectations for a reunion, an adoptee in his sixties wrote, "To learn who I really was -- what my roots were." Other adoptees in the study reiterated this sentiment with comments such as,

I hope to feel more complete about who I am. I hope to learn more about my [birth] parents in order to understand more about myself.

To discover who I am.

Some sense of self and closure about who I am.

I want the history of life that all nonadopted people take for granted.

To feel more secure in my identity/ancestry.
To find my own identity and heritage.

Getting to know the missing part of my life. Filling the void of wondering how and where my traits come from.

Many of the adoptees who had already experienced a reunion shared their experiences of the reunion and the effect that they felt it had on them.

I feel like a whole or complete person for the first time in my life and I am a more secure and confident person ... Without knowing where we come from and our backgrounds and having many aspects of our personalities connected to others, we cannot move forward. I needed to know my history as well as my medical background and someone, anyone, who looked like me ...

I have gained a certain peace of mind knowing my birthmother ... in some ways, it is tough to know how to feel about this new person in my life. Many questions have been answered about myself, but many more have come up because of the reunion.

[It has] filled what I perceived as a 'hole' in my life -- feeling that some parts of me were secret or unacceptable ... I feel less like a 'ghost' in my own life.

Growing up, not knowing a single blood relative is very hard. I was always loved as a child, being adopted was never a big issue but once I found out and wrote to my birth mother I felt more fulfilled, more whole ... I know that I have characteristics like my [birth] mother and my half sister. I understand more about myself now.

When you are adopted and you haven't had a reunion it is like you are putting together a puzzle without the box lid to see what the finished product will be. As the puzzle is almost finished, one piece is missing, the face of the person in the puzzle. When you have a reunion and you learn about your heritage, characteristics, etc., that piece is completed and you finally see the full picture of who you are.

It is difficult to disregard these poignant accounts, especially since reports such as these were so pervasive among the respondents of this study. Other studies, too, have also reported similar comments from their participants. In fact, most of the studies
that have relied on the self-reports of adoptees have concluded that adoptees seek information on their birth history for reasons related to identity and that the reunion increased their sense of self (Triseliotis, 1973; Sorosky et. al. 1975; Day, 1979; Depp, 1982; Dukette, 1984; Anderson, 1989; Campbell, Silverman, & Patti, 1991; Sachdev, 1992; Sullivan & Groden, 1995). The most recent of these studies, a survey by Sullivan and Groden (1995) conducted on behalf of the Ministry of Social Services, in the province of B.C., reported that 77% of the adoptees who responded said that the reunion had made a difference for them. Like the present study, Sullivan and Groden (1995) found that the responses were almost unanimously positive, and the comments focused on feelings of "completeness" due to the acquisition of a genetic, and ancestral history.

In light of all this, how does one explain the obvious contradiction between the self-reports of participants in this study and the results obtained from the standardized test of self-concept? The most obvious explanation could be related to the most obvious limitation of this study. Like most research in this area, the present study relied on volunteers who were members of local organizations that promote the reform of current adoption practices. These organizations have been active in lobbying for open records; therefore, it is likely that most of the participants of this study were people who agree with more openness in adoption for various reasons, including a belief that reunions will increase the adoptee's sense of identity. This belief may have biased the comments expressed by participants in this study regarding the benefits of reunions and contact with birth relatives. Nonetheless, this bias was perhaps slightly reduced in the Sullivan and Groden (1995) study because they surveyed not only adoptees who had searched, but also those that had not searched but had been sought out by birth relatives. Even in their study, the majority of adoptees surveyed indicated that the reunion had affected their feelings about themselves and 95% of them said they would recommend reunions to others (Sullivan & Groden, 1995).
Therefore, there seems to be more than sampling bias involved in this discrepancy between the self-reports of adoptees and their standardized scores of self-concept. Perhaps another explanation may be derived by closer examination of the differences between searching and nonsearching adoptees. Unfortunately, the present study was not able to make any comparisons between searchers and nonsearchers because of the insufficient numbers of participants who identified themselves as nonsearchers. Nevertheless, other studies have resulted in significant findings. Various studies have found that searchers and nonsearchers vary from one another (Triseliotis, 1973; Dukette, 1975; Smith, 1976; Aumend & Barrett, 1984; Stein & Hoopes, 1985). For example, although Aumend and Barrett (1984) found that both groups of adoptees in their study had positive self-concepts, they found that the nonsearchers self-concept scores were significantly higher than those of the searchers. Moreover, the nonsearchers had significantly less concern about their own background. Consequently, it may be that those adoptees who search are those who value knowing about their personal history, and who want to have a more thorough understanding of their place in the "grand scheme" of life. Perhaps these people more strongly value that element of self-concept that Erikson describes as a feeling of connectedness between one's past, present and future and "an unconscious striving for a continuity of personal character" (Erikson, 1950, p. 261).

Another possibility, along these same lines, is that these adoptees have developed their sense of self in the more predominant and socially encouraged mode based on individuation and autonomy, rather than on connection and attachment which may have come more naturally to them. As previously discussed in Chapter Two, Erikson's model of identity development has had much influence on shaping the understanding of identity development and consequently, the behaviours used to measure identity development. This model is based on the successful achievement of individuation and autonomy. Gilligan (1982) maintains that Erikson's model is more
male dominant and she argues for another model of identity development which may be more applicable to women, one that is based on connection, relationships, and attachment to others. This type of model may also be more applicable to adoptees who search. That is, women tend to search for birth relatives more than men do, and women make up the majority of participants in most studies related to searching (Gladstone & Westhues, 1994; Triseliotis, 1973). Both were also true in the present study. The consistency of this gender pattern may suggest that Gilligan’s model may be more applicable to searching adoptees. Although these adoptees have been successful in developing their identity through individuation and autonomy, perhaps, it would have been more natural for them to define their sense of self through connection and attachment with others. Although most nonadopted people ultimately can do both, develop their sense of self based on their attachment to significant others and also gain autonomy, adoptees typically have not had the opportunity to develop some of these same attachments. This may explain why they feel there are "gaps" or "holes" in their sense of self.

These explanations for the discrepancy between the participants' self-reports and their scores on the TSCS have focused on what may have been happening for the adoptees in this study. However, a thorough examination of explanations must also consider the other factors involved, that is, the assessment measure that was used. As was previously discussed in Chapter Two, some critics of the TSCS have questioned its applicability to different groups of people. These arguments have generally focused on the TSCS norms and their generalizability across cultures, genders, age groups, and different socioeconomic levels. Participants of the present study scored well within the norms provided for the TSCS, therefore, the norms may not necessarily be the issue for these groups of participants. Rather, the question of applicability of this test for adoptees might focus more on the actual questions of the test and how the measure operationalizes self-concept. For example, although adoptees in this sample scored
within the norms on the Family Subscale, various respondents made comments or clarified their responses to test statements which included the word "family," including statements such as "I understand my family as well as I should," or "I take a real interest in my family." There appeared to be confusion on the part of some respondents of who, or which "family," the test was referring to. In addition, the questions on "family," and most other questions as well, were quite general; perhaps too general to tap into some element of self concept that may be specific to adoptees. For instance, Brodzinsky et. al. (1992) point out that identifying with role models in middle childhood and feeling a sense of "sameness" with others is an important precursor to answering the question "Who am I?" Therefore, perhaps more information about how adoptees see themselves and develop their sense of self concept could be provided if statements that were more specific were to be included in the measure. In other words, perhaps the TSCS would be more thorough in measuring the self-concept of adoptees if it included statements such as, "I wish I looked more like others in my family," "I am different than other people in my family," or even "I don't know as much about my heritage as I would like to." It might be beneficial to conduct more research on the validity of the dimensions of self-concept of the TSCS in general, and more specifically how it applies to people who were adopted, and whether the TSCS norms are applicable to adoptees. Until this is done, it may be premature to draw any firm conclusions regarding the self-concept of adoptees based on their scores on this measure.

Other Findings

Besides examining the differences in self-concept between pre-reunion and post-reunion groups of adoptees, this study also looked for differences within the groups. Specifically, analyses were conducted amongst the group of participants who had experienced a reunion in order to better understand the influence of the reunion on
them. As already discussed, over 88% of post-reunion adoptees reported that the search and reunion had affected their self-concept and they almost unanimously reported that the effect had been positive and that knowing what they now knew, they would still choose to do it again. These findings are strongly supported by those of Sachdev (1992) and Sullivan and Groden (1995). Sachdev (1992) reported that approximately 94% of the participants in his study had no regrets about going through with a reunion. And, in Sullivan and Groden's (1995) survey of 476 post-reunion adoptees, 97% of the respondents reported that they were glad that they went through with the reunion and 95% said they would do it again. The adoptees in Sullivan and Groden's (1995) study identified some difficulties and disadvantages associated with the reunion, such as "disappointment related to the relinquishment of a fantasy, feelings of intrusion in negotiating a relationship with strangers who may expect more intimacy sooner than is comfortable, upsetting dynamics within the adoptive family" and "the waiting period prior to reunion and the adjustment period that accompanied the negotiation of roles and relationships afterward" (p.26-27). Respondents also commented that "the hardest part [of the process] was making the decision to go ahead with the reunion" and that "the first meeting was a source of considerable anxiety" (p. 28). Nevertheless, the general conclusion that can be reached from these studies is that, for most adoptees, the advantages of the experience of reunion outweigh the disadvantages.

Sullivan and Groden (1995) reported that the first meeting in a reunion can create much anxiety for those involved. The present study also provided some interesting information regarding these first contacts. For example, a negative relationship was indicated between scores on the TSCS and the amount of time it took for people to meet in person after they first made contact. In other words, the higher the TSCS score, the less time people took before they met in person, or the more time people took to meet in person, the lower their self-concept score. There are likely
many ways of interpreting this, but in light of the information obtained from Sullivan and Groden (1995), perhaps the most obvious explanation for this relationship is that the people with more positive self-concepts were able to overcome their anxiety more easily and to proceed more quickly to a meeting. Perhaps the others took more time to get to know one another, to feel more comfortable with each other and to prepare for the meeting.

The present study also seemed to indicate a relationship between when the reunion occurred and how much time it took people to meet in person. It seemed that the more recent the reunion, the more time people had taken to meet in person. This finding was not surprising. As people have learned more about the complexity of the relationships and feelings that surround reunions, they have seen the benefits of taking things slowly. It is more common, now, for counsellors and support groups for those experiencing a reunion, to advise people to take some time before they meet in person. Counsellors often suggest that people begin by writing letters to one another, exchanging photos and information slowly, then move on to talking on the phone, and eventually plan to meet in person when both parties feel ready.

The process leading up to the meeting also seemed to have an effect on the long term amount of contact that people continued to have. That is, there appeared to be a relationship between the amount of time it took for people to meet in person after they first made contact and the amount of contact they had currently. The findings of the study indicated that the more time it took for people to meet in person, the less frequent their current contact. One could make various speculations on the reasons for this. However, the study also indicated another relationship which might explain this; there was a significant association between the amount of time it took people to meet in person and the amount of travelling distance between them. That is, the further away people lived from one another, the more time passed before they met in person. This was not surprising since it is obvious that the further away people are, the more
practical considerations and planning are involved in order to meet. It is likely that as
distance was a factor for the first meeting, it continued to be a factor throughout the
relationship. That is, the geographic distance or the cost of transportation may have
detracted from the amount of contact that adoptees had with their birth relatives
(Gladstone & Westhues, 1994).

Nevertheless, regardless of the distance, the findings of the present study
seemed to indicate that the more time that had passed since the reunion, the less
frequent the contact between the adoptees and the birth relative they searched for
and/or first had contact with. There is very little research on the outcomes of reunions
and the relationships that are formed from them. However, some people who work in
the field have noticed a trend in the reunions they have observed. Initially, it seems
that the reunion "takes over" people's lives and they spend most of their time either
thinking about the other person or having contact with them. People are typically
excited about the reunion and want to spend as much time as they can sharing stories
and getting to know one another. Eventually though, one or both parties may become
overwhelmed and feel the need to distance for a while in order to absorb, process and
integrate the whole experience. People then usually move into the stage in their
relationship where they must mutually sort out and "negotiate" their roles and the type
of relationship they want to have. This can be a difficult time and often the relationship
is tested at this stage, but eventually, people will decide to either end the relationship
or to move ahead with it, and work at integrating it into the rest of their lives. These
stages vary and the amount of time to move through them also varies from reunion to
reunion. However, it usually means that, at some point in the relationship, the amount
of contact people have will diminish from the amount they typically had at the beginning
of the reunion.

There was one final correlation from the findings of this study that is worth
noting. The results of the analysis on the postreunion adoptees indicated that there
was an association between adoptees' scores on the TSCS and how long it had been since they had experienced the reunion. The more time that had passed since the reunion, the higher their self-concept score. A possible explanation for this is that, as discussed above, the more time that had passed since the reunion, the more likely that the adoptees had obtained relevant information from their birth parents and integrated it into their sense of self. This finding is interesting, especially in light of the finding that there was no difference in self-concept scores between the group of adoptees who had not experienced a reunion and the group of those that had. This finding might suggest that the amount of time since a reunion might be a variable in assessing whether or not reunions have an effect on adoptees' self-concept.

Unfortunately, this study was limited in that it did not differentiate between adoptees based on how long it had been since their reunion; it grouped all post-reunion adoptees into one group, regardless of whether they had experienced a reunion a month ago or a few years ago. It is suggested, then, that future research be conducted comparing the self-concept of adoptees at different time intervals after the search and reunion. In this way, one might be able to determine whether self-concept is affected at different stages of the reunion process.

The finding of an association between time since reunion and scores on the TSCS may have been confounded by the ages of the adoptee. This study did not look at the relationship between the ages of the post-reunion adoptees and when they had their reunion, however, it did note that all adoptees over the age of 60 were in Group 1, the post-reunion group, and common sense would say that these adoptees would have been reunited longer than the younger adoptees. This study found that adoptees over the age of 60 scored significantly higher than adoptees in their 20's (pre-reunion and post-reunion adoptees combined) and there was a noted trend for TSCS scores to increase as age increased. From this study, it is difficult to draw any conclusions as to whether the scores for adoptees over age 60 were higher because they had been
reunited with birth relatives for a longer period. It should also be noted that the sample of adoptees over the age of 60 was also too small to reliably conclude that there in fact was a significant difference between the self-concept scores of adoptees over the age of 60 and those in their 20's.

There is one final finding from the analyses on post-reunion adoptees that deserves discussion before moving on to more general findings derived from the entire sample of adoptees in this study. Amongst adoptees who had experienced a reunion, the results seem to indicate that overall, adoptees' hopes and expectations for the reunion had been fulfilled. The majority of respondents indicated satisfaction with the reunion and less than 5% of the post-reunion adoptees indicated being "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied," and 27% indicated "neutral/mixed." Although other studies have also reported that adoptees have generally been satisfied with the results of their reunion and that it had a positive effect on their sense of identity or self-concept (Sachdev, 1992; Gladstone & Westhues, 1994; Sullivan & Groden, 1995), none of these studies compared adoptees' level of satisfaction with their scores on a standardized measure of self-concept. The present study attempted to do this and the findings indicated that there was a difference in self-concept scores amongst the group of post-reunion adoptees based on how satisfied they were with the reunion.

Although the scores were well within the normal limits, the TSCS scores for adoptees who reported that the search and reunion had "very satisfied" their hopes and expectations were significantly higher than the scores for adoptees who reported "neutral/mixed," "dissatisfied," or "very dissatisfied." An examination of the respondents who were less than satisfied did not reveal any obvious similarities between them on demographic characteristics and their comments on their experiences also varied. Some indicated that the information or reaction they received from their birth relatives had been less than they expected or had made them feel badly. For example, one respondent wrote
It was explained that I was to just get over it and go on with my life ... My reunion was very damaging and is worse than not knowing ...

Another respondent wrote that the effect on her sense of self concept had been negative because of "the attitude" she encountered.

I can't be part of the family or [have] the rest know about me ... my experience is it always seems I'm on the outside looking in and I would like to feel included naturally.

And others said,

My birth mother was very shocked to get a call from me, she didn't understand how I found her. I found out what I needed to know but I found her attitude disappointing, it was quite negative.

[It has been] positive in the sense of ethnic background, identity. Negative because birth mother was raped so sense of "why am I here" still exists somewhat.

It's not what I expected. I expected a family like I was raised with.

Others stated disappointment with the current adoption laws on disclosure and the effects it had on them acquiring the information they wanted or that because of how difficult it was to search, when they finally made contact with birth relatives, some significant members had passed away.

My uncle passed away one month before I found him. I've been searching for 21 years now. It's a long and difficult process. Hopefully the governments will change the policies.

I only wish I would have started my search earlier. I received one letter from my birth aunt ... Unfortunately she passed away before she received my letter and I feel like I missed out on meeting a really wonderful person.

And finally, some participants made comments about the reunion relationships and the effects on them. For instance,

I have found my reunion to be a positive experience for the most part. Even after 4 years I feel that I am struggling with my birth mother to define our relationship in a way that each of us would
feel satisfied.

... I was quite fortunate with my search and reunion, however, I still have big feelings/issues around the experience, as I do about my experience as an adoptee. I think everyone's experience is unique ...

I have gained a certain peace of mind knowing my birth mom. However, there are times when I don't know how she fits into my life. I sometimes want to ask her questions about her that might help me understand me more. But I also stop myself from becoming closer to her than my adoptive parents. It can be a touchy situation.

... Although it has been an overwhelmingly positive experience and one full of personal growth, it has also been very emotionally taxing. In my case, my adoptive parents have had a very difficult time coming to terms with the situation which has been difficult for me to handle and adjust to. I believe family dynamics in adoptive families can be very unhealthy if founded upon the secrets imposed by the closed adoption system.

At this point, there are no conclusive explanations for the difference in self-concept scores between adoptees whose reunion had "very satisfied" their hopes and expectations and those adoptees who felt less satisfied. As Gladstone and Westhues (1994) suggest, more studies are needed on the outcomes of reunions, and the relationships that are formed from them. In addition, the findings of the present study indicate the need for more research on the effects that reunion outcomes have on the adoptees' sense of self-concept.

The present study also conducted some analyses based on the sample of participants who had searched and had a reunion, or were still searching. An assessment of the responses of pre-reunion and post-reunion adoptees resulted in some interesting information regarding adoptees' relationships with their adoptive parents. First of all, the findings of the study indicated that the majority of adoptees who participated had what they considered to be "very close" or "somewhat close" relationships with their adoptive parents. Sachdev (1992) reported a similar finding
based on his Canadian study of 124 adoptees who searched and had a reunion with a birth parent. Two-thirds of adoptees in Sachdev's study described their relationship with either or both of their adoptive parents as "close" or "somewhat close" during their growing-up years, and less than one-tenth described their relationship as poor. Like Sachdev's study, the findings of the present study indicated that less than 10% of adoptees reported "somewhat distant" or "very distant" relationships with their adoptive parents when they were children and over 70% reported "somewhat close" or "very close" relationships. Although the number of participants who reported distant relationships with their adoptive parents during their teenage years rose to 34%, this number decreased again to about 15% for their current adult relationships. Moreover, the majority of participants who had at least one adoptive parent still living, reported that their current relationship was "very close" or "somewhat close" and most had informed them of their search and/or reunion. One could speculate that the reason for the increase in distant relationships during the teen years may be typical for teenagers in general. Therefore, the results of these studies seem to contradict the claims made by some researchers that adoptees who seek contact with their birth relatives are usually those who have had poor relationships with their adoptive parents (Sachdev, 1992).

Some researchers have claimed that there are few significant differences between biological and adoptive families in terms of individuation and self esteem (Hoopes, in Brodzinsky & Schechter, 1990). Brodzinsky et. al. (1992) have implied that the process of identity development is different for adoptees than for nonadoptees. In light of this, the present study sought to examine the self-concept of adoptees based on the different ages when they began living with their adoptive family and the type of relationship they had with their adoptive parents.

Norvell and Guy (1977) reported a significant relationship between age at time of adoption and self-concept. Using the Berger Self Concept Scale, they compared the
self-concept scores of adults who had been adopted under 1 year of age, 1 to 3 years of age, and over 4 years old. They found that the older the individual was at the time of the adoption, the lower their self-concept score. Most of the participants in the present study were less than 1 year old when they began living with their adoptive families, and more than half were less than 3 months old. Therefore, this study was not able to make the same comparisons that Norvell and Guy (1977) made. Nevertheless, the present study compared the self-concept scores between adoptees who were less than 3 months old, 3 to 12 months old, and more than 12 months old when they began living with their adoptive families. This analysis did not indicate that there was any difference between these groups.

Because the age groups tested in the present study were different than those tested in the Norvell and Guy (1977) study, it is difficult to say whether the findings of the present study support or contradict the findings of Norvell and Guy (1977). Brodzinsky et. al. (1992) suggest that adoptees, in particular those who are placed in their adoptive homes before the age of 6 months usually form attachments and resolve the autonomy task of identity in the same way as nonadoptees. The findings of the present study did not indicate any differences in self-concept scores between the self-concept scores of adoptees who began living with their adoptive families before they were 3 months old and those that were adopted later. This finding is not consistent with Ames' (1996) who found a difference in attachment between Romanian children who were adopted over the age of 4 months and those adopted younger than 4 months. Further research is suggested in order to provide more clarity on this issue.

In addition to assessing the relationship between adoptees' scores on self-concept and the age in which they began living with their adoptive families, the present study also looked at adoptees' self-concept scores in relation to how they viewed their relationships with their adoptive parents. As previously discussed, the majority of participants rated their childhood and their current relationships with their adoptive
parents as "very close" or "somewhat close." Nevertheless, adoptees whose TSCS scores fell above the median rated their relationships with their adoptive parents significantly more positively than those whose scores fell below the median. The difference in their ratings was minimal though with both groups rating their relationships better than "casual, neither close nor distant", and closer to "somewhat close" or "very close."

One other study has attempted to make comparisons of the self-concept scores of adoptees based on their relationships with their adoptive parents. Aumend and Barrett (1984) found a significant difference between searchers and nonsearchers on their TSCS scores and also on their attitudes towards their adoptive parents. In both cases, nonsearchers scored significantly higher than searchers. That is, nonsearchers had higher self-concept scores and also had more positive attitudes towards their adoptive parents. Nonetheless, it is again difficult to draw any conclusions based on these findings and that of the present study because the research is so limited. Further research is necessary in order to acquire further understanding on the possible association between adoptive relationships the adoptees' self-concept.

Other findings of this study, too, demand corroboration through further research. The findings of this study have perhaps raised more questions than answers. Some of these questions are a result of limitations of this study, others are simply the result of the need for more research and knowledge about adoption. Therefore, before continuing this discussion by examining the implications of the findings for counselling, the limitations of this research must be highlighted as well as some suggestions for clarification by further research.
Limitations

The previous discussion regarding the findings of this study also discussed some of the limitations of the research. First, a limitation of this study was that it was not possible to perform the analyses adoptees who identified themselves as nonsearchers. Aumend and Barrett (1984) found significant differences between the TSCS scores of nonsearching and searching adoptees. Unfortunately, this study only examined the scores of adoptees who were interested in searching and reunion, but because of insufficient numbers of participants who identified themselves as nonsearchers, could not compare these scores with adoptees who were not interested in searching. The results are, therefore, more applicable to adoptees who consider themselves searchers than to those who are nonsearchers. In addition, because the sample was predominantly made up by women, the results may also be more applicable to women who search than to men.

A second limitation of this study was that its sample was limited to volunteers who were members of two local adoption groups: the TRIAD Society or The Forget-Me-Not Family Society. As discussed, even though these people may be living in different areas of the province or throughout Canada or the U.S., this was not a random sample but rather a biased sample based on their affiliations with these two organizations. Therefore, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to the general population of adoptees.

The study also based many of its findings on participants' the self-reports and their responses on the background questionnaire. This is not only problematic because of the possible bias which may exist due to the limited sample, but also because of more general limitations which are generally associated with non-standardized questionnaires. These limitations may include possible reactivity to the
measurement procedure, less-than-perfectly reliable ratings, observations or recollections, and inadequate reliability and internal validity.

The other measure that was used, the TSCS may also have had limitations. Although it was possibly the best selection for this study, there were some questions regarding its applicability to the population that was tested. First, because there have not been any studies conducted on Canadian populations, it is unknown whether the norms of the TSCS do generalize to the Canadian participants in this study. Also, although there was a minimal number of aboriginal participants in this study, there was some indication that the TSCS norms may not generalize to First Nations people. Second, it is unknown whether the TSCS is a reliable measure of self-concept for people who were adopted. As previously discussed, there was some indication that the statements regarding "family" were confusing to some respondents. Furthermore, the TSCS may not have adequately operationalized self-concept for adoptees. The questions may have been overly general and may not have tapped into a dimension of self-concept which is unique to adoptees. For instance, it was this researcher's impression that the statements which make up the TSCS tend to focus on autonomy and independence rather than on self-concept based on one's relationships to others.

Another limitation of this study was that it was limited to a cross-sectional design. The results suggest that a longitudinal study could have provided a more thorough understanding of adoptees' self-concept at different stages of the search and reunion process. For instance, it could be interesting to measure the adoptees' self-concepts when they begin their search, and again at different intervals after the reunion, comparing their self-concept scores throughout the process. It may be that the self-concept scores would not differ in a longitudinal study, nevertheless, it would be interesting to see if the study design would make a difference.

Finally, because of the study's quasi-experimental design, it was not able to control for possible confounding variables. That is, the study did not control for other
characteristics or events which may have affected the self-concept of participants. For example, there were some differences between the sample groups; there were differences in the ages of participants, their relationship status, and the ages in which they began living with their adoptive families. These variables, and perhaps others that were undetected, may have confounded the results of the study.

**Future Research**

Future research could improve on the present research by correcting and controlling some of the limitations discussed above. For instance, research is required on the applicability of the TSCS to Canadian samples, and to people who were adopted. Research could examine whether the dimensions of self-concept defined by the TSCS are adequate to measure the self-concept of adoptees, and whether the TSCS's conceptual definition of self-concept is concordant with the stages of identity development suggested by Brodzinsky et. al. (1992).

Further research is required using adequate, standardized measures of self-concept. Some studies have used standardized measures to make comparisons between adoptees and nonadoptees, and searching and nonsearching adoptees. However, few have used standardized measures to compare the self-concept of adoptees before and after a reunion. As more and more countries change their adoption laws to allow for reunions, it will become easier for researchers to reach people who have experienced a reunion and to learn from them what effects this has had. Further research is also required on the relationships that are developed through reunions and their effects on the self-concept of people involved.

Knowledge on the effects of reunion on self-concept is not only relevant for studies on adoptees. A similar study to this one could also be conducted with birth parents. It might examine the birth parents' experiences of self concept before being
united with the child they relinquished and again after being reunited. Many studies have reported that birth mothers describe the reunion experience as "healing" and ending their grief; that they are finally able to "forgive" themselves and "make peace" with their decision to relinquish their child (Report to the Minister of Social Service, 1994; Depp, 1982; Silverman, Campbell, Patti & Style, 1988; Sullivan & Groden, 1995). It is possible that this experience and the resolution of long-time feelings may have an effect on the self-concept of birth-parents. It would also be beneficial to learn more about adoptive parents and their experiences of reunion. As more than one participant of the present study pointed out, adoptive parents are often active participants in reunions and the outcomes also have an effect on them, as well as other family members, such as siblings, spouses and children. Undoubtedly, more understanding is required on the effects of adoption reunions on all members of the adoption circle.

Implications for Counselling

Studies on adoption reunions are relatively new and much more research is required before the ramifications of these experiences for adoptees, and other members of the adoption circle, can be fully understood. Still, several implications for counselling can be drawn from the findings of the present study.

First, even though respondents' narrative reports indicated that they searched for reasons related to their sense of self-concept or identity, as a group, adoptees in the study scored well on self-concept, as it is measured by the TSCS. In comparison to the norms, the adoptees in the present study appeared similar to the general population, in terms of self-concept as it is operationalized by the TSCS. Counsellors should be aware of the findings that suggest that adoptees are able to develop positive self-concepts without reunions and information about their birth relatives. This is particularly important for clinicians who work with adoptees who feel they need this
information and yet have not been able to acquire it because they have been denied a reunion. Counsellors can assist adoptees to realize their positive sense of self in the absence of information about their birth families.

The perception of some adoptees in the study was that their sense of self could be enhanced by contact with birth relatives. Although the findings did not indicate any difference between the self-concept scores of adoptees who had had contact and those that had not, these reported self-perceptions are an important consideration for counselling. Counsellors who take a client-centred perspective will accept and respect the individual client's view and help him or her explore this self-perception. For instance, clients may begin by exploring how he or she considers his or her own self-concept in comparison to those of nonadoptees in the general population. The counsellor can then work together with the client to develop alternate frames of reference that may help the individual realize himself or herself more fully. In addition, the counsellor can assist adoptees to develop realistic expectations for the reunion.

Counsellors can work with adoptees to help them explore the tasks of identity development and how they perceive their resolution of these tasks. Adoptees may explore what their expectations are in terms of personal growth and what they hope to acquire through search and reunion. Counsellors can assist adoptees to understand that the therapeutic value of search and reunion may occur over time, rather than all at once. The benefits may be in the process of searching, whereby adoptees can actively examine their experience of being adopted and the issues which may be related to that (Andersen, 1989). As one adoptee in the study put it,

I have become aware that my adoption left a substantial scar within my soul ... While [search and reunion] could be "a can of worms," I expect that it will bring some completion one way or another. But the real work has to take place inside me, as this is where all adoptees' healing journeys must begin -- and end.
The "real work" that this participant refers to can begin well before the adoptee makes the decision to search or enter into a reunion. It can begin early on in the individual's life and with the cooperation and involvement of the whole family. The findings of the study indicated that most of the adoptees who searched had close relationships with their adoptive parents, and told them about the search and reunion. Counsellors who work in adoption have a responsibility to all members of the adoption circle; they can help adoptees and their families to view adoption as a family matter and to discuss it openly and honestly from the beginning. Then, when search and reunion occurs, the adoptee and his or her family can be supported in integrating new members and new experiences into the family system.

Conclusion

Although adoption has occurred throughout history, and in various parts of the world, its forms have varied and changed. The practice of adoption is currently changing in British Columbia, with records becoming more open and accessible to adoptees and their birth relatives. The reasons cited for these changes reflect the view that adoptees require information about their birth history in order to develop positive self-concepts. This study sought to examine the self-concept of adult adoptees and to see whether there were any differences between the self-concept of adoptees who had experienced a reunion and those who were still searching.

The results of the study indicated that, as a whole, adoptees scored very similarly to the general population on a measure of self-concept, and that there was no difference in self-concept between the group of adoptees who had had contact with birth relatives and those that had not. These findings are not consistent with those of other researchers that claim that adoptees are more vulnerable than the general
population to identity conflicts, and that they need birth history information in order to develop a positive sense of self.

However, this study also obtained narrative reports from participants claiming that reunions did affect their self-concepts. This discrepancy between the narrative and quantitative data obtained in this study is, perhaps, a reminder that the process of self-concept is very complex, as is the process of adoption reunions. There is no doubt that more research is required on the effects of reunions on self-concept before these processes can be more fully understood. Further comprehension of these processes is necessary for improved theory, legislation, and practice in adoption.
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APPENDIX A

Letters of Introduction to Study Participants
November, 1995

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am a graduate student at U.B.C. conducting research on adoption for my M.A. thesis. I am interested in learning about the experiences of people who were adopted and the feelings they develop about themselves. I am hoping that you will contribute to my research by sharing your experiences.

Enclosed are two brief questionnaires. Because I recognize that adoption is very personal and that adoptees have a right to privacy, I want you to understand how these questionnaires were sent to you and what will be done with them once they are returned to me.

1. The president of the Forget-Me-Not Family Society, Cecelia Reekie, has agreed to assist with this research by sending you this package on my behalf. I prepared the packages and gave them to Cecelia. She then addressed the envelope and mailed them to some members. At no time have I, nor will I, have access to the Forget-Me-Not Family Society's mail list. I do not know who has received the packages.

2. The questionnaires are to be completed anonymously. Please do not write your name anywhere on the questionnaires or return envelope. Once you complete the questionnaires, please use the addressed and stamped envelope included to return them directly to me at U.B.C. The Forget-Me-Not Family Society will not be aware of whether you participate or not, nor will they have access to the completed questionnaires. Only my research supervisor and I will have access to the questionnaires which are anonymous and confidential.

3. The information that I receive from the returned questionnaires will be summarized as a group and the findings will be reported in my thesis report. No individual responses will be reported. A copy of the thesis will be bound and shelved in the library at U.B.C.

If you are willing to contribute to this research, please complete the questionnaires anonymously. Do not write your name on the questionnaires or anywhere on the return package. The questionnaires will take you approximately 20 minutes to complete. Once you've completed them, please return them to me as soon as possible using the self-addressed and stamped envelope that is included. I would also be interested in any comments that you might like to add. You have the right to
November, 1995

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am a graduate student at U.B.C. conducting research on adoption for my M.A. thesis. I am interested in learning about the experiences of people who were adopted and the feelings they develop about themselves. I am hoping that you will contribute to my research by sharing your experiences.

Enclosed are two brief questionnaires. Because I recognize that adoption is very personal and that adoptees have a right to privacy, I want you to understand how these questionnaires were sent to you and what will be done with them once they are returned to me.

1. The president of the TRIAD Society, Audrey Scammel, has agreed to assist with this research by sending you this package on my behalf. I prepared the packages and gave them to Audrey. She then addressed the envelope and mailed them to some members. At no time have I, nor will I, have access to TRIAD Society's mail list. I do not know who has received the packages.

2. The questionnaires are to be completed anonymously. Please do not write your name anywhere on the questionnaires or return envelope. Once you complete the questionnaires, please use the addressed and stamped envelope included to return them directly to me at U.B.C. The TRIAD Society will not be aware of whether you participate or not, nor will they have access to the completed questionnaires. Only my research supervisor and I will have access to the questionnaires which are anonymous and confidential.

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refuse to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time. If the questionnaires are completed and returned, it will be assumed that consent has been given.

If you have any questions regarding the study or the questionnaires, please do not hesitate to contact me, or my research supervisor, Dr. Beth Haverkamp at (604) 822-4919. This number is a message machine only for student research, please leave your name (a first name only is fine) and a phone number where you can be reached and we will get back to you as soon as possible. In addition, please contact me be a separate letter if you are interested in receiving a summary of the results of the study once completed.

I thank you for your cooperation. As you may be aware, research is limited on the issues related to adoption. With legislation on adoption being examined throughout the country, research is as important as ever. Thank you for contributing to knowledge on the experiences of adoptees.

Sincerely,

Sandy Moniz-Lecce, M.A. (Candidate)
Graduate Student, U.B.C.

(For more information, please write to me at the U.B.C. address above.)
APPENDIX B

Instructions to Study Participants

Background Questionnaire
Questionnaire 1

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

PLEASE ANSWER EACH OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS BY CHECKING THE ONE RESPONSE THAT FITS BEST FOR YOU. (Except where indicated.)

1. Which one of the following describes you best?

   _____ I have completed a search and had contact with a birth relative
   _____ I have completed a search and have not had contact with a birth relative
   _____ I am in the process of searching and have not had contact with a birth relative
   _____ I did not search but a birth relative searched for me and we have had contact
   _____ I have not searched and have not had contact with a birth relative

2. Present age:

   19 - 24 _____   40 - 49 _____
   25 - 30 _____   50 - 59 _____
   30 - 39 _____   60 or over _____

3. Sex: Male _____   Female _____

4. Highest level of education attained:

   Some high school or completed high school _____
   Vocational training or some college or university _____
   University graduate or postgraduate _____
5. Current employment (check all that apply):
   Professional or semiprofessional _____
   Clerical, sales, or technician _____
   Skilled or semi-skilled manual labour _____
   Self-employed _____
   Homemaker _____
   Student _____
   Unemployed _____
   Retired _____

6. Household income:
   less than 12,000 _____ 35,000 - 49,999 _____
   12,000 - 19,999 _____ 50,000 - 59,999 _____
   20,000 - 34,999 _____ 60,000 and above _____

7. Where do you live?
   Canada _____
   U. S. _____
   Other country: ______________________

8. Is the area you live in considered to be:
   Urban _____
   Suburban _____
   Rural _____
9. Your current relationship status:

Married _____  Single/Never married _____
Divorced _____  Living with significant other _____
Widowed _____  Other: _______________________

10. Do you have children?

Yes _____  No _____
If yes, have you adopted children? Yes _____ No _____
Have you placed a child(ren) for adoption? Yes _____ No _____

11. How would you describe your ethnic heritage?
(Check all that apply):

Don't know _____  Asian _____
Aboriginal _____  African _____
European _____  East Indian _____
Hispanic _____  Other _______________________

12. How would you describe your adoptive parents' ethnic heritage?
(Check all that apply):

Don't Know _____  Asian _____
Aboriginal _____  African _____
European _____  East Indian _____
Hispanic _____  Other _______________________

13. Your religion: _______________________

14. Your adoptive parents' religion: _______________________

- 3 -
15. Age when you began living with your adoptive family:

Don't know _____ 1 to 2 years old _____
Less than 3 months old _____ 2 to 4 years old _____
3 to 6 months old _____ 5 years and older _____
6 to 12 months old _____

16. Age when you were told of your adoption:

Don't know _____ 11 to 13 years old _____
Less than 3 years old _____ 14 to 17 years old _____
3 to 5 years old _____ 18 to 24 years old _____
6 to 10 years old _____ Over 24 years old _____

17. Who told you of your adoption? (check all that apply):

Adoptive parent(s) _____
Adoptive sibling or other relative _____
Social worker/Counsellor _____
Found out on my own _____

18. How would you describe your relationship with your adoptive parents?

a.) when you were a child: Very close _____

Somewhat close _____
Casual, neither close nor distant _____
Somewhat distant _____
Very distant _____
b.) when you were a teen:  Very close _____
   Somewhat close _____
   Casual, neither close nor distant _____
   Somewhat distant _____
   Very distant _____

c.) at the present time:  Very close _____
   Somewhat close _____
   Casual, neither close nor distant _____
   Somewhat distant _____
   Very distant _____

Parent(s) deceased _____

19. Did you tell your adoptive parents of your search and reunion?:
   Yes _____  No _____
   If yes, when?  Before began searching _____
               After search but before reunion _____
               After reunion _____

20. What was the **most important** influence on your decision to search? Rank this number 1. If there were others, rank 2, 3, 4, etc.:

   Medical information _____  Curiosity _____
   Encouragement from others _____  Need to know _____
   Planning to have children _____  Identity _____
   Other: ________________________________________

- 5 -
21. Did you receive any background information about your birth parents before you made your decision to search?

Yes _____ No _____

22. Was the information useful? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, how? __________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

23. What did/do you hope to achieve, learn or experience through search and reunion?

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

IF YOU HAVE NOT HAD CONTACT WITH A BIRTH RELATIVE, PLEASE SKIP TO QUESTION #34 AT THE BOTTOM OF PAGE 8.

IF YOU HAVE HAD CONTACT WITH A BIRTH RELATIVE, PLEASE CONTINUE:

24. Who were you first reunited with?

Birth mother _____

Birth father _____

Birth sibling _____

Other: __________________________

-6-
25. How long ago did you first have contact with a birth relative?

Less than 3 months ago _____ 12 to 24 months ago _____
3 to 6 months ago _____ 2 to 5 years ago _____
6 to 12 months ago _____ More than 5 years ago _____

26. What type of first contact did you have?

Letter _____ Phone _____ In Person _____

27. If your first contact was by letter or phone, how long after this first contact until you met in person?

Within 1 week _____ 6 to 12 months _____
Within 1 month _____ 1 to 2 years _____
1 to 3 months _____ More than 2 years _____
3 to 6 months _____ Have not met in person yet _____

28. Currently, how often are you in contact with the person you searched for? (whether by letter, phone, or in person):

Daily _____ On special occasions _____
Weekly _____ Yearly _____
Monthly _____ Never _____

Every few months _____

29. How far do you live from the person you made contact with? (Check all that apply.)

Same town/city _____ Same province _____
Less than two hour drive _____ Another province _____
2 to 5 hour drive _____ Another country _____

-7-
30. Who else have you had contact with? (check all that apply):

No one else _____ Birth siblings _____
Birth mother _____ Birth grandparents _____
Birth father _____ Other birth relative(s) _____

31. Has the reunion had any effect on your sense of self concept or identity?
   Yes _____ No _____
   If yes, has the effect been positive _____ or negative _____
   Please describe how: ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

32. Overall, has the search and reunion satisfied your hopes and expectations so far?
   Very satisfied _____ Satisfied _____
   Neutral/Mixed _____
   Dissatisfied _____ Very dissatisfied _____

33. Knowing what you know now, would you choose to do it again?
   Conduct the search? Yes _____ No _____
   Have a reunion? Yes_____ No _____

34. Are you currently seeing a counsellor/therapist for concerns that you see as related to adoption?:
   Yes _____ No _____
   - 8 -
35. The space below is for you to make comments on your experience or any question in this booklet. (Optional)

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Thank you for participating in this study.
Please continue with Questionnaire 2 on the next page.
APPENDIX C

Example of Tennessee Self-Concept Scale
Questionnaire 2

DIRECTIONS

The statements in this booklet are to help you describe yourself as you see yourself. Please respond to them as if you were describing yourself to yourself. Do not omit any item. Read each statement carefully, then select one of the five responses listed below. Put a circle around the response you chose. If you want to change an answer after you have circled it, do not erase it but put an X mark through it the response and then circle the response you want.

Remember, put a circle around the response number you have chosen for each statement.

<table>
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<th>Mostly False</th>
<th>Partly False and Partly True</th>
<th>Mostly True</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You will find these response numbers repeated at the top of each page to help you remember them.

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. I have a healthy body.  
2. I am an attractive person.  
3. I consider myself a sloppy person.  
4. I am a decent sort of person.  
5. I am an honest person.  
6. I am a bad person.  
7. I am a cheerful person.  
8. I am a calm and easygoing person.  
9. I am a nobody.  
10. I have a family that would always help me in any kind of trouble.  
11. I am a member of a happy family.  
12. My friends have no confidence in me.  
13. I am a friendly person.  
15. I am not interested in what other people do.  
16. I do not always tell the truth.  
17. I get angry sometimes.  
18. I like to look nice and neat all the time.  
19. I am full of aches and pains.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROW 1</th>
<th>Identity</th>
<th>What He or She Is</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ROW 2</td>
<td>Self Satisfaction</td>
<td>How He or She Accepts Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROW 3</td>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td>(How He or She Acts)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tennessee Self-Concept Scale

**Score Sheet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Column A</strong></th>
<th><strong>Column B</strong></th>
<th><strong>Column C</strong></th>
<th><strong>Column D</strong></th>
<th><strong>Column E</strong></th>
<th><strong>Column F</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Self</td>
<td>Mortal-Ethical Self</td>
<td>Personal Sell</td>
<td>Family Sell</td>
<td>Social Sell</td>
<td>Self Criticism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Clinical & Research Form**

- Name
- Date
- Time Started
- Time Ended
- Total Time
- Normal Status
- Sex
- Education (Number of Years)
- Ethnic Background (Oriental)
- Marital Status
- Usual Occupation
**DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES**

NOTE: Use the responses on the Answer Sheet, not the Score Sheet, in determining these scores.

In items 1–90,
- Number of 5's: 45
- Number of 4's: 32
- Number of 3's: 22
- Number of 2's: 1
- Number of 1's: 0

T/F Total = 45 + 32 + 22 + 1 = 100

In items 91–100,
- Number of 5's: 12
- Number of 4's: 38
- Number of 3's: 21
- Number of 2's: 1
- Number of 1's: 0

Total number of, 5's: 57
4's: 73
3's: 22
2's: 1
1's: 0

Total number of, 5's: 57
4's: 73
3's: 22
2's: 1
1's: 0

**EMPIRICAL SCALES**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>DP</th>
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<th>PSY</th>
<th>PD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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**ROW TOTALS**

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<tr>
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<th>TOTAL CONFLICT</th>
<th>VARIABILITY</th>
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<table>
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<th>TOTAL CONFLICT</th>
<th>VARIABILITY</th>
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<table>
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<th>TOTAL CONFLICT</th>
<th>VARIABILITY</th>
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</table>

**COLUMN TOTALS**

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<th>TOTAL CONFLICT</th>
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**TOTAL P + N**

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<tr>
<th>VARIABILITY Range of P + N</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Σ |P − N| means the sum of the absolute value of |P − N|. The addition is nonalgebraic (without regard to minus sign).