SELF-ACCEPTANCE AND LOCUS OF CONTROL IN ACADEMICALLY UNDERPREPARED COLLEGE FRESHMEN

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

For many years academically underprepared college freshmen have been a concern to American colleges and universities (Bolyard & Martin, 1973). Some students graduate from high schools where they have been processed through traditional curriculum programs without the basic skills necessary for a successful college experience (White & Bigham, 1982). Being academically underprepared is not necessarily related to age, gender, race, creed, or color (Walter, 1982). In fact, underprepared college students can be identified as those who have a deficiency of some sort that makes it difficult to achieve their college objectives (Walter, 1982). "That deficiency may be one of aptitude, emotional maturity, physical capacity, or education or economic background" (Walter, 1982, p. 160).

Underprepared college students are often characterized as being in the lower one-third of their class academically (Cross, 1972) and as being among the most dropout prone students in higher education today (Astin, 1975; Beal & Noel, 1980; Panos & Astin, 1968). They also are characterized as individuals who do not put forth their best effort, as often nervous and tense in class, and as individuals who have failed to develop adequate self-confidence (Cross, 1972). White and Bigham (1982) report that these underprepared students often have a confusing view of what a degree program is all about.

As for the institutions of higher learning, most are not equipped to adequately service the underprepared student, especially since federal funding for many "special" programs has been either drastically reduced or cut completely (Walter, 1982). Yet, with the trend in declining enrollment, many institutions are

welcoming any student who has a desire to participate in the college experience with little regard for past academic performance (Beck, 1980; Roueche, 1978; Walter, 1982).

What can colleges and universities do to help these students who may experience recurring feelings of confusion, frustration, and discouragement as they struggle to keep their grade point averages as well as their motivation high enough to stay in school? Jenkins and Guthrie (1976) suggest that colleges and universities who have established remedial programs for underprepared students have viewed these individuals as primarily deficient in academic skills. Little attention has been given to the social environment in which these students live or how this environment might be supporting or interfering with scholastic performance. Jenkins and Guthrie (1976), however, emphasize the importance of preparing underprepared students for certain recurrent problems of living in the college environment and, in fact, demonstrate the use of a behavior rehearsal strategy to teach these students how to cope with the demands of the college environment. Although behavior rehearsal strategies are primarily used in "such clinical settings as psychotherapy, assertiveness training and systematic desensitization" (Jenkins & Guthrie, 1976, p. 149), this strategy has been shown to be successful in helping underprepared students effectively adjust to the demands of their college environment (Jenkins & Guthrie, 1976).

In working with underprepared college students, Beck (1980) suggests a need for reassessment of traditional approaches in education, claiming that they are negative and deficiency oriented. Instead, she favors a more positive approach with a genuine commitment to the success of students.

Statement of the Problem

Academically underprepared students are a growing concern faced by many American colleges and universities. Given the need to understand ways in which

academically prepared and underprepared students are different, this study is designed to answer the following question: Are there differences in the self-acceptance and locus of control of academically prepared and academically underprepared college freshmen?

Significance of the Study

The underprepared college student has been a growing source of concern for educators (Burley, 1982). Every year many college students experience academic difficulties as a result of being unprepared for the task of learning (Bolyard & Martin, 1973; Burley, 1982). There are literally thousands of students in higher education today who do not read, write, speak, study or listen well enough to be successful in college (Roueche, 1978). These are often the very students who are experiencing test anxiety, general frustration, and discouragement over their academic performance (Culler & Holahan, 1980; Kirkland & Hollandsworth, Jr., 1979; Kirkland & Hollandsworth, Jr., 1980; Wittmaier, 1972).

It is quite common for underprepared college students to have an external locus of control (Klingelhofer & Hollander, 1973). The concept of internal versus external (I-E) control of reinforcement as defined by Rotter (1966) refers to the degree of control individuals believe they have over their environments. Although Rotter's I-E Scale (1966) has been the most widely used instrument for measuring degree of internality versus externality (Levenson, 1981), investigators have not only questioned the validity of the unidimensional I-E concept (Hersch & Scheibe, 1967), but suggest the need for a multidimensional view of the locus of control construct (Collins, 1974; Mirels, 1970). Levenson (1981) has reconceptualized Rotter's unidimensional I-E Scale into three dimensions of control, an internal dimension (I scale) that measures the extent to which individuals believe they have control over their own lives, and two external dimensions, belief in powerful others (P scale) and belief in chance or fate (C scale).

In relating locus of control to academic achievement, several studies (Bar-Tal, Kifir, Bar-Zohar & Chen, 1980; Brown & Strickland, 1972; McGhee & Crandall, 1968) have found levels of academic achievement for "internals" to be consistently and significantly higher than those of "externals." Individual internal-external locus of control counseling has been shown to be effective in helping underprepared students develop more of an internal control over their academic environment (Whyte, 1978).

Predictions for self-esteem have not been formulated as precisely as those for locus of control (Richards, Jr., 1983); however, self-concept theory postulates self-esteem as a generalized expectancy similar to locus of control with positive self-esteem functioning in a similar fashion to internal locus of control (Dickstein, 1977; Super, Statishersky, Mattin & Jordan, 1963). Underprepared college students often have poor self-concepts, and may seem to lack clarity in terms of life goals (Beck, 1980). Beck (1980) suggests that these two characteristics may well be the most detrimental deficiencies to the success of these students.

Curriculum for underprepared college students needs to focus as much on individual growth and development as on the basic skills necessary for academic success (Roueche, 1978). In fact, the most successful college programs designed for the underprepared student place equal priority on self-concept development and basic academic skill development (Roueche, 1978). White and Bigham (1982) have developed an information systems approach to admissions, instruction, and retention of college students with developmental lag. In the affective domain, students are provided feedback concerning their attitudes toward reading, mathematics, writing skills, and homework assignments as well as the multi-faceted aspects of their own self-concept development (White & Bigham, 1982). University counseling personnel are available to those students who may be facing

personal or social problems and who may be in need of "counseling, evaluation, or therapy" (White & Bigham, 1982, p. 25).

The results of this study should offer insight to counselors and psychologists in college and university settings who are in a position to work directly with academically underprepared students. Understanding how academically underprepared students differ from those who are academically prepared is a start in knowing how to plan programs and provide services that can offer underprepared students an opportunity for a more successful college experience. If, as the literature suggests, lower self-acceptance and a stronger sense of external control are found among underprepared college students, then institutions may consider identifying these students at the start of their college career and offer them programs and services designed to meet their special needs. Such programs and services could be vital to the retention of these students.

Definition of Terms

The following are definition of terms used in this study.

Academically underprepared students. Academically underprepared students are those who enter college their freshman year with a composite American College Test (ACT) score of 13 or below. These scores fall at or below the 25th percentile of college-bound students who completed the ACT assessment from 1978-81 (The American College Testing Program, 1982).

Academically prepared students. Academically prepared students are those who enter college their freshman year with a composite American College Test (ACT) score of 23 or above. These scores fall at or above the 75th percentile of college-bound students who completed the ACT assessment from 1978-81 (The American College Testing Program, 1982).

Self-acceptance. Self-acceptance, a subscale of the California Psychological Inventory (CPI) (Gough, 1975), is used ". . . to assess factors such as a sense of

personal worth, self-acceptance, and a capacity for independent thinking and action" (p. 10).

Locus of control. Locus of control is a generalized expectancy to perceive reinforcement either as being under one's own control (internal control) or as being beyond one's control (external control) and therefore due to chance, fate or powerful others (Rotter, 1966).

Internality, powerful others, and chance. These terms are a reconceptualization of Rotter's I-E Scale into a multidimensional view of locus of control which includes one type of internal orientation and a differentiation between two types of external orientation (Levenson, 1972).

Internal scale. This scale measures internal orientation indicating belief in personal control (Levenson, 1972).

Powerful others scale. This scale measures external orientation indicating a belief in the basic order and predictability of the world, along with an expectancy that powerful others are in control (Levenson, 1972).

Chance scale. This scale measures external orientation indicating a belief that the world is unordered and unpredictable (Levenson, 1972).

Limitations

The following limitations are inherent in this study:

1. This study includes freshmen from one church-supported college campus; therefore, the results will not be generalizable to all academically underprepared college freshmen attending other church-supported colleges.

2. The Levenson Scales (I, P, and C) and the Sa Subscale of the CPI have relatively low reliability and validity, thus weakening the ability to determine the measurement of locus of control and self-acceptance respectively.

Null Hypothesis

The following null hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference between the self-acceptance levels of academically prepared and underprepared college freshmen enrolled in a church-supported college.

2. There is no significant difference between the internal dimension of locus of control of academically prepared and underprepared college freshmen enrolled in a church-supported college.

3. There is no significant difference between the external Powerful Others dimension of locus of control of academically prepared and underprepared college freshmen enrolled in a church-supported college.

4. There is no significant difference between the external Chance dimension of locus of control of academically prepared and underprepared college freshmen enrolled in a church-supported college.

Organization of the Study

In this chapter the reader has been presented with an introduction to the topic under study. The statement of the problem, significance of the study, definitions of terms, limitations, and null hypotheses were stated. A review of the literature beginning with academically underprepared college students and continuing with issues involving locus of control and self-acceptance in relation to academic achievement are presented in Chapter 2. The methodology and instrumentation used in conducting this study are discussed in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 includes the results of the statistical analysis as well as the interpretation of the data collected. A summary, conclusions, recommendations, and implications for counselors are provided in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A review of the literature relevant to this study is contained in this chapter. Issues of locus of control and self-acceptance as they relate to academically underprepared college students are the primary foci of this chapter. Finally, the role of the counselor in working with academically underprepared college students is examined.

Locus of Control

Overview and definitions

Investigators have repeatedly concerned themselves with the ability of individuals to exert control over their personal environment (Lefcourt, 1966). Belief in personal control or belief in lack of personal control can be considered both as a general disposition that influences the behavior of an individual across a wide variety of situations and as a more specific belief system that may apply only to limited situations (Phares, 1976). For example, although some people may generally believe they have a rather restricted control over their lives, they may at the same time feel that in certain specific situations they can exert a great deal of personal control (Phares, 1976).

This study is concerned with the locus of control construct as a generalized expectancy variable stemming from social learning theory (Rotter, 1954). The definition of locus of control which has guided efforts in the development of an instrument for measuring this construct is:

> When a reinforcement is perceived by the subject as following some action of his own but not being entirely contingent upon his action,

> then, in our culture, it is typically perceived as the result of luck, chance, fate, as under the control of powerful others, or as unpredictable because of the great complexity of the forces surrounding him . . . we have labeled this a belief in external control. If the person perceives that the event is contingent upon his own behavior or his own relatively permanent characteristics, we have termed this a belief in internal control (Rotter, 1966, p. 1).

As a result of these efforts, the Rotter Internal-External Scale (often simply referred to as the I-E Scale) was developed (Rotter, 1966).

Although Rotter's I-E Scale (1966) has been the most widely used instrument for measuring degree of internal/external orientation, its unidimensional nature has received criticism (Levenson, 1981). Hersch and Scheibe (1967) are among the first to have raised the question of the validity of a unidimensional I-E Scale, claiming this type of measurement was too simplistic for the theoretical formulations of the internal-external control construct. They suggest a need for a multidimensional view of the construct. The discovery of other inadequacies of the I-E Scale has led to studies emphasizing the need for a multidimensional approach to the locus of control construct (Collins, 1974; Gurin, Gurin, Lao & Beattie, 1969; Mirels, 1970). After an extensive review of the locus of control literature, Joe (1971) concludes that the data suggests the locus of control construct should be studied as a multidimensional rather than a unidimensional level.

Levenson (1972) has reconceptualized Rotter's I-E Scale (1966) into a multidimensional scale which offers a differentiation of the external orientation. Levenson (1972) offers the following dimensions of control in the form of three measurement scales, an internal orientation scale and two external orientation scales. The Internal scale (I scale) is designed to measure the degree of personal

control individuals believe they have over their environment. The Powerful Others scale (P scale) is designed to measure the degree to which individuals believe in the basic order and predictability of the world along with an expectancy that powerful others are in control. The Chance scale (C scale) is designed to measure the degree to which individuals believe that the world is unordered and unpredictable.

Levenson's Scale (1972) is used in this study since it offers the suggested (Joe, 1971) multidimensional approach for measuring the locus of control construct. Results of a study by Prociuk and Breen (1975) suggest that the Levenson (1972) Scales are a viable alternative to Rotter's (1966) unidimensional I-E Scale.

Locus of control and academic achievement

Early investigation with the locus of control construct focuses on achievement behavior and is based on the assumption that individuals with a strong internal orientation show more drive and persistence in efforts to achieve than those individuals with a strong external orientation because the "externals" are not likely to make a connection between their individual efforts and outcomes (Levenson, 1981).

Although earlier studies indicate a relationship between locus of control and academic achievement (Crandall, Katkovsky & Crandall, 1965; Crandall, Katkovsky & Preston, 1962; McGhee & Crandall, 1968), publication of the Coleman report (Coleman, Campbell, Hobson, McPartland, Mood, Weinfeld & York, 1966) seems to have launched other researchers into an expansive investigation of this relationship (Bar-Tal & Bar-Zohar, 1977). In general, the Coleman (1966) report indicates that in minority students a sense of control over the environment is strongly related to academic achievement. Those students who show a greater sense of control over their environment also have a higher

achievement level than those who do not show as much control over their environment.

Bar-Tal and Bar-Zohar (1977) reviewed the literature involving studies on locus of control and academic achievement. Of the 36 studies reviewed, only one (Massari & Rosenblum, 1972) shows a negative relationship between an internal locus of control and academic achievement. Four of the studies reviewed (Eisenman & Platt, 1968; Gozali, Cleary, Walster & Gozali, 1973; Milgram, 1971; Prociuk & Breen, 1973) show no significant relationship between locus of control and achievement. The 31 remaining studies, however, all show a positive relationship between an internal locus of control and academic achievement. From their review, Bar-Tal and Bar-Zohar (1977) conclude that there is a strong trend indicating that locus of control is related to academic achievement.

Prociuk and Breen (1974) used Levenson's (1972) multidimensional I, P, and C Scales to investigate the relationship between locus of control and two academically related variables: (a) college academic performance, and (b) study habits and attitudes. In this study, 89 psychology undergraduates were administered the I, P, and C Scales and a survey of study habits and attitudes. Academic performance was measured by undergraduate grade point averages. Correlational analyses were used to study the data. The results support the prediction that study habits and academic performance are positively related to perceived internal control and negatively related to chance control. The P and C scales were shown to be positively correlated (.68); however, achievement and study habits were shown to be more related to the chance expectancy than to the powerful others orientation. The researchers conclude that their findings support Levenson's differentiation of external orientation into Powerful Others and Chance dimensions. They also suggest that the results of this study offer a

possible explanation for the lack of significant findings in the earlier research (Warehime, 1972) on locus of control and academic achievement.

In another study relating locus of control to academic performance, Prociuk and Breen (1975) used the concept of defensive externality as explained by Rotter (1966). The term defensive externality implies an external locus of control as a method of avoiding the responsibility for expected negative outcomes (Rotter, 1966). In academic environments a "defensive external" might be someone who is highly achievement-oriented but rationalizes failures by putting the blame on external situations (Prociuk & Breen, 1975). Defensive externals are considered to have a "powerful others" orientation as described by Levenson (1972). These "defensive externals" should theoretically be more successful academically than "congruent externals" (those who believe that academic success is primarily due to luck or chance factors) (Prociuk & Breen, 1975). In this study the researchers administered the I, P, And C Scales to 66 male and 94 female college students. The results indicate that those individuals identified as internals are more successful academically than those individuals who are identified as defensive externals. The results also indicate that defensive externals are more successful academically than congruent externals.

Self-Acceptance

Overview and definitions

Self-esteem is generally defined as individuals' perceptions of their personal worth (Ziller, Hagey, Smith & Long, 1969). Under the rubric of self-esteem one finds such terms as self-concept, self-image, self-regard, and self-identity, to mention a few (Klingelhofer & Hollander, 1973). Regardless of how one wishes to describe this perception of self, it is closely associated from a positive perspective with feelings of self-confidence, self-acceptance, self-worth, dignity, and self-assurance and from a negative perspective with feelings

of lack of self-confidence, a sense of inferiority, self-rejection and, particularly in the academic setting, with feelings of anxiety and a fear of failure (Klingelhofer & Hollander, 1973).

Coopersmith (1967) suggests that persons with high, medium, and low self-esteem not only have different expectations for the future but differ in degree of interpersonal assertiveness and have different basic styles of coping with stressful events in their lives. Individuals with high self-esteem expect to be successful, have greater social independence, have more self-confidence, and are generally more assertive in their social actions (Coopersmith, 1967). In contrast, individuals with low self-esteem are more withdrawn socially, usually do not trust in their abilities, and are reluctant to openly express their opinions (Coopersmith, 1967). Rosenberg (1965) states that individuals with low self-esteem are more likely to experience greater interpersonal awkwardness and greater interpersonal isolation than individuals with high self-esteem.

Although the relationship between self-concept and locus of control has not been fully researched, Eisenberg (1979) suggests that people who truly like and respect themselves are also likely to have an internal orientation toward control over their lives; whereas, people who feel deeply inadequate and insecure are more likely to have an external orientation toward control over their lives. The Personal Orientation Inventory (Shostrom, 1966) includes a measure of self-actualization within which is included the attribute of self-regard (Geist & Borecki, 1982). Positive correlations have been found between this measure of self-actualization and internal locus of control (Hjelle, 1976; Warehime & Foulds, 1971). These results seem to confirm Eisenberg's belief.

Although several different terms have been used in the literature to describe individuals' perceptions of their personal worth and these different terms will continue to be used in subsequent descriptions of pertinent studies

regarding academic achievement as it relates to this sense of personal worth, it is the term self-acceptance as described by Gough (1975) in the Self-acceptance subscale of the California Psychological Inventory that is used for measurement purposes in this study. The Self-acceptance subscale is designed ". . . to assess factors such as a sense of personal worth, self-acceptance, and capacity for independent thinking and action" (Gough, 1975, p. 10).

Self-acceptance and academic achievement

Academically underprepared college students are characterized as being among the most dropout prone students in higher education today (Astin, 1975; Beal & Noel, 1980; Panos & Astin, 1968). Historically, academic difficulty has been the most widely accepted conjecture as to why students drop out of college (Maudal, Butcher, & Mauger, 1974). Although there is some truth to the proposed relationship between academic difficulty and attrition (Ikenberry,1961), one cannot conclude that academic difficulty is the only reason for dropping out of college (Maudal, Butcher, & Mauger, 1974). In fact, Summerskill (1962) reports that only about one-third of college dropouts do so as the result of academic difficulty. Other researchers offer socio-economic status (Barger & Hall, 1965; Ikenberry, 1961) and characteristics of the institution (Astin, 1964) as significant contributors to the attrition rate; however, neither of these variables seems to have held with any type of consistency (Maudal, Butcher, & Mauger, 1974).

The role of personality as a possible factor contributing to college attrition has received attention (Astin, 1964; Klingelhofer & Hollander, 1973). It is apparent that students who succeed academically do not do so as the result of some isolated intellectual factor (Centi, 1962; Flaherty & Reutzel, 1965). Flaherty and Reutzel (1965) contend that there must be some non-intellectual factors in the personalities of individuals that reinforce and foster academic success or failure. Self-concept seems to be one of these non-intellectual

personality factors that effects academic achievement (Borislow, 1962; Fink, 1962; Klingelhofer & Hollander, 1973). Students who have consistently experienced low grades or failing grades for most of their school years can be expected to have not only anxiety and a fear of failure but a low self-concept as well in terms of their academic abilities in a higher education setting (Klingelhofer & Hollander, 1973). In fact, Beck (1980) goes so far as to suggest that a poor self-concept may be one of the most detrimental deficiencies contributing to poor performance in underprepared college students.

There is empirical evidence to support the contention that self-perception is directly related to academic performance (Fink, 1962; Klingelhofer & Hollander, 1973). Bailey (1971) compared random samples of male and female college students classified as "underachievers" and "achievers" on two self-rating scales. On both scales the "achievers" received significantly higher mean scores than did the "underachievers." Bailey (1971) concludes that the higher self-concept of the "achiever" group provides these students with a more success-oriented image as well as with greater motivation for academic achievement.

Flaherty and Reutzel (1965) conducted a study in an effort to discover non-intellectual aspects of the personality which are believed to be related to academic achievement. The California Psychological Inventory (CPI) (Gough, 1975) was used as the measurement instrument for these non-intellectual variables because of its non-clinical nature and its social orientation. The subjects were all 149 members of the freshman class of Mount Mercy College. The CPI was administered at the beginning of the school year and compared to grade point averages at the end of the school year. Results of the study indicate that certain CPI scales can be used as possible non-intellectual predictors of academic achievement. The Self-acceptance subscale was shown to be one of the significant ($p < .01$) predictors of academic achievement.

Maudal, Butcher and Mauger (1974) conducted a study using objective measures of personality in addition to academic and demographic variables in an attempt to discriminate between groups of college persisters, transfers, and dropouts. The subjects were two freshmen classes at Bethel College during the 1969-1970 and 1970-1971 academic years; the total sample included 273 males and 433 females. The results suggest that students who drop out are impetuous, impulsive, and spontaneous, but at the same time require reassurance and sympathy from others. They also seem to feel alienated and left out if they do not receive this reassurance.

Cross (1972) consolidated and integrated a considerable amount of data gathered from large-scale surveys. From this information Cross (1972) concludes that academically underprepared students show a high level of anxiety and a fear of failure in academic situations. This deeply ingrained sense of anxiety and fear seems to result in what she terms failure-threatened personalities. Cross (1972) contends that these underprepared students are less confident of their academic abilities and have a tendency to avoid risk-taking situations.

Counseling the Underprepared College Student

Bednar and Weinberg (1970) reviewed 23 studies that examined the effectiveness of a variety of treatment programs designed for underprepared college students. These studies used grade point average as the dependent variable and a specific treatment program designed to improve academic performance as an independent variable. From their review, the researchers conclude that counseling, whether individual or group, focusing on the dynamics of the underprepared student and used in conjunction with a study skills course seems to be the most effective of all treatment methods.

Although there is disagreement as to whether counseling can or cannot help the underprepared college student succeed academically (Bednar & Weinberg,

1970; Moore, Jr., 1970), Snow (1977) contends that counselors can make a dramatic difference in the chances for success of these students. Furthermore, Snow (1977) suggests that helping underprepared students develop an internal locus of control should be a primary focus of the counseling process. Pierce, Schauble and Farkas (1970) have shown that internal control behaviors can be learned through explanation, reinforcement, and modeling. Whyte's (1978) study shows that internal-external locus of control counseling combined with study skills instruction and group counseling is an effective treatment for working with underprepared college freshmen. Providing academic environments in which students are helped to gain a sense of personal control over their college experiences is not only vital to the development of a positive self-concept but also to the development of a will to succeed (Snow, 1977).

Summary

A review of the literature on issues of locus of control and self-acceptance as they relate to academic achievement in underprepared college students was presented in this chapter. The role of the counselor in working with academically underprepared students also was examined.

The locus of control construct was reviewed primarily from Rotter's (1966) unidimensional conceptualization of the construct derived from social learning theory. The need for a multidimensional approach to the locus of control construct was discussed and supported. Levenson's (1972) reconceptualization of Rotter's (1966) unidimensional measure of locus of control (I-E Scale) into a multidimensional measure (Internal, Powerful Others, and Chance Scales) was defined, described, and supported as a viable option to Rotter's original approach to the locus of control construct.

A review of the locus of control literature and academic achievement supported a strong trend toward locus of control being related to academic

achievement. A number of studies found a positive relationship between internal locus of control and academic achievement, and also showed that feelings of external control can negatively effect academic performance.

Empirical evidence was found to support the contention that self-perception is directly related to academic performance. Academically underprepared college students were shown to be among the most dropout prone and as having lower self-esteem and lower self-confidence than those students who were academically prepared for the college experience.

Counseling was shown to make a difference in the chances for success of underprepared college students. The most effective treatment methods were shown to be either individual or group counseling used in conjunction with a study skills course. Snow (1977) suggests that helping underprepared students develop an internal locus of control should be a primary focus of the counseling process.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter includes a discussion of subjects, instrumentation and procedures used in this study. The research design and the statistical analysis of the data also are described.

Subjects

Subjects for this study were selected from among the freshman class of 1985 enrolled in a church-supported college in the Southwest. The freshmen were divided by computer listing into two groups: students with composite ACT scores of 13 and below, and students with composite ACT scores of 23 and above. Although students entering college with composite ACT scores of 15 and below are considered academically underprepared for the college experience (Roueche, 1983), composite ACT scores falling at or above the 75th percentile and those falling at or below the 25th percentile based on national norms (23 and above and 13 and below, respectively), were used in this study (American College Testing Program, 1982). Since the ACT is designed to assess an individual's general educational development as well as ability to complete college-level work (American College Testing Program, 1982), scores at or above the 75th percentile and those at or below the 25th percentile should best represent those students who are academically prepared and underprepared respectively for the college experience.

All of the students who attended the Fall 1985 freshman orientation and whose composite ACT scores were $\geq$ 23 or $\leq$ 13 were involved in this study. There were 50 students with composite ACT scores of $\geq$ 23 and 48 students with

composite ACT scores of ≤ 13. The number of students in each group was proportionately representative of freshmen on this particular college campus in past years (see Table 1).

Table 1

Number and Percent of Freshmen at a Church-Supported College from 1976-1985 Having Composite ACT Scores of ≥ 23 or ≤ 13

Year	ACT ≥ 23	% of Total Class	ACT ≤ 13	% of Total Class	Total Class
1976-77	67	27%	46	18%	250
1977-78	55	21%	59	23%	258
1978-79	56	17%	91	28%	325
1979-80	57	22%	62	24%	254
1980-81	70	24%	71	24%	291
1981-82	63	23%	64	23%	273
1982-83	77	23%	98	29%	333
1983-84	55	23%	45	19%	242
1984-85	62	24%	62	24%	255
1985-86	54	24%	51	23%	223

Instrumentation

There were two instruments used in this study. Levenson's (1981) I, P, and C Scales were used to measure locus of control, and the Self-acceptance (Sa)

subscale of the California Psychological Inventory (CPI) (Gough, 1975) was used to measure self-acceptance.

Levenson's Scales

Levenson's (1981) Internal, Powerful Others, and Chance Scales were used to measure perceived locus of control. These scales were designed as a reconceptualization of Rotter's (1966) I-E Scale, and consist of items adapted from Rotter's scale as well as a set of statements designed to specifically identify beliefs concerning three dimensions of control. These three dimensions of control are measured by the following scales. The Internal scale is a measure of internal orientation indicating belief in personal control; the Powerful Others scale is a measure of external orientation indicating a belief in the basic order and predictability of the world along with an expectancy that powerful others are in control; and finally, the Chance scale is a measure of external orientation indicating a belief that the world is unordered and unpredictable (Levenson, 1981). The I, P, and C Scales consist of three 8-item subscales with a six-point Likert format (-3 = strongly disagree; -2 = disagree somewhat; -1 = slightly disagree; +1 = slightly agree; +2 = agree somewhat; +3 = strongly agree). The 24 items are presented to the subject as a unified attitude scale. Scoring the scales involves adding the subject's responses to each item. A constant of 24 is added to the total of each scale in order to eliminate negative values; therefore, the range for each scale is from 0 to 48 (Levenson, 1981).

Reliability. Since the I, P, and C Scales are not in the form of a published test, reliability and validity have to be shown through use of this instrument in various research situations. For a college student sample (N=152), Kuder-Richardson reliabilities yielded .64, .77, and .78 for the I, P, and C Scales respectively (Levenson, 1974). A seven-week interval test-retest reliability

study with a college population yielded .66 for the I scale, .62 for the P scale, and .73 for the C scale (Lee, 1977).

Validity. Construct validity of the I, P, and C Scales has been primarily demonstrated through convergent and divergent methods that are designed to show significant ". . . correlations with other measures of the general construct as well as a pattern of theoretically expected positive and negative relationship with other variables" (Levenson, 1981, p. 23). In one study involving a college sample (N=75), Rotter's (1966) I-E Scale was found to correlate positively (.25, .56) with both the P scale and the C scale, and negatively (-.41) with the I scale (Levenson, 1972).

California Psychological Inventory

The Self-acceptance (Sa) subscale of the California Psychological Inventory (CPI) (Gough, 1975) was used as the measure for self-acceptance in this study. The CPI consists of 480 true/false items which yield 18 standard scales (Gough, 1975). Each scale is designed to assess one important aspect of personality, and the total set of scales is intended to provide an overall survey of an individual from a social interaction perspective (Gough, 1975). The 34-item Sa scale was designed to ". . . assess factors such as a sense of personal worth, self-acceptance, and capacity for independent thinking and action" (Gough, 1975, p. 10).

The CPI is suitable for subjects age 12 or older. No formal training is required to administer the test since it is largely self-administering. Testing time is approximately 45 minutes to an hour. The CPI may be hand or machine scored. Handscoring requires no special training (Gough, 1975).

Reliability. Reliability of the Sa scale is available from studies using the test-retest method (Gough, 1975). One study involved two high school junior classes who took the test in the fall of 1952 and again as high school seniors one

year later. Test-retest correlations for the high school females and males on the Sa scale were .71 and .67 respectively (Gough, 1975). Another reliability study, using Kuder-Richardson formula 21, involved 292 freshmen from Bethany Nazarene College. This study yielded a rationale equivalence reliability of .49 for the Sa scale (Stasser, 1970/1971).

Validity. Construct validity of the Sa scale has been shown through studies using convergent and divergent methods. In one study involving college students (N = 66) Vingoe (1968) found Sa correlated significantly with peer ratings (.44) and self-ratings (.49) of self-acceptance based on the CPI Manual's description of self-acceptance. In another assessment sample of 40 college seniors, ". . . Sa correlated -.57 with the staff's Q-sorting of the phrase, 'Has a readiness to feel guilty'" (Gough, 1975, p. 21).

Procedure

All freshmen enrolled in the church-supported college were requested to take the California Psychological Inventory (Gough, 1975) and Levenson's (1981) I, P, and C Scales during the Fall 1985 freshman orientation. The freshmen were divided by computer listing into two groups based on composite ACT scores. The two groups were: (a) students with composite ACT scores of 13 and below, and (b) students with composite ACT scores of 23 and above. All subjects in each of these two groups were then compared on self-acceptance as measured by the Self-acceptance subscale of the California Psychological Inventory, and on locus of control as measured by Levenson's Internal, Powerful Others and Chance Scales.

Research Design

A causal comparative design was used to examine differences between academically prepared (composite ACT scores of $\geq$ 23) college freshmen and academically underprepared (composite ACT scores of $\leq$ 13) college freshmen on

measures of self-acceptance and locus of control. This design was selected because of the need to study variables related to academically underprepared freshmen at the church-supported college used in this study.

Interpretation of the findings in a causal comparative study requires caution. The primary weakness in this type of design is the lack of control over independent variables, thus weakening the ability to determine cause and effect. As a result, the researcher must consider other plausible reasons that might account for the obtained results.

Statistical Analysis

A one-way between subjects MANOVA was originally planned to analyze the results of this study; however, upon examination of the error correlation matrix of the dependent variables it was determined that a construct was not formed. Therefore, a one-way analysis of variance was used to analyze each of the four dependent variables. The fixed independent variable was academic preparedness ($ACT \geq 23$, $ACT \leq 13$). The dependent variables were Self-acceptance as measured by the Self-acceptance (Sa) subscale of the CPI, and three dimensions of locus of control as measured by Levenson's Internal, Powerful Others and Chance Scales. Omega squared was the strength of association test performed on all significant results.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The results of the statistical analyses along with an interpretation of the data collected are presented in this chapter. A summary of the results is provided at the conclusion of this chapter.

An examination of the error correlation matrix of the dependent variables reported in Table 2 indicates that there were not enough correlation coefficients of large enough size ($\geq .35$) to have formed a construct; therefore, an analysis of variance was performed using each of the four dependent variables: Self-acceptance, Internality, Powerful Others, and Chance.

Table 2

Within Cells Error Correlation Matrix

	SA	I	P	C
SA	3.37	--	--	--
I	.15	5.47	--	--
P	-0.34	.01	7.65	--
C	-0.22	.00	.56	6.57

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the self-acceptance levels of academically prepared and underprepared college freshmen enrolled in a church-supported college.

A one-way analysis of variance was used to analyze the data where the independent variable was academic preparedness (ACT $\geq$ 23, ACT $\leq$ 13) and the dependent variable was self-acceptance. An examination of the summary table reported in Table 3 indicates a statistically significant ($p < .05$) F ratio; thus Hypothesis 1 was rejected. An examination of the means reported in Table 4 shows that freshmen who are academically prepared for the college experience have a higher degree of self-acceptance ($\bar{X}$=22.42) than those who are academically underprepared ($\bar{X}$=19.20) for the college experience. The strength of association as indexed by omega squared indicated that 18% of the variance in self-acceptance was accounted for by level of academic preparedness.

Table 3

Summary Table of Analysis of Variance: Self-Acceptance

Source	SS	df	MS	F
Between Groups	252.61	1	252.61	22.16*
Within Groups	1094.10	96	11.40	--
Total	1346.70	97	--	--

*$p < .05$

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviations of Self-Acceptance and Locus of Control of Academically Prepared and Underprepared College Freshmen[a]

Variable	ACT $\geq$ 23[b]	ACT $\leq$ 13[c]
Self-acceptance	22.42[d]	19.20
	(3.16)	(3.57)
Locus of Control		
Internality	35.14	34.95
	(5.66)	(5.25)
Powerful Others	15.26	19.60
	(6.42)	(8.75)
Chance	13.74	18.72
	(6.04)	(7.07)

[a] $N = 98$

[b] $n_1 = 50$

[c] $n_2 = 48$

[d] Top value reports the mean; bottom value reports standard deviation.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the internal dimension of locus of control of academically prepared and underprepared college freshmen enrolled in a church-supported college.

A one-way analysis of variance was used to analyze the data where the independent variable was academic preparedness (ACT $\geq$ 23, ACT $\leq$ 13) and the dependent variable was Internality, an internal dimension of locus of control. An

examination of the results indicates no significant ($p > .05$) difference between those freshmen who are academically prepared and those who are academically underprepared for the college experience; thus, Hypothesis 2 failed to be rejected.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference between the external Powerful Others dimension of locus of control of academically prepared and underprepared college freshmen enrolled in a church-supported college.

A one-way analysis of variance was used to analyze the data where the independent variable was academic preparedness (ACT $\geq$ 23, ACT $\leq$ 13) and the dependent variable was Powerful Others, an external dimension of locus of control. The analysis of variance summary table reported in Table 5 indicates a statistically significant ($p < .05$) F ratio; thus, Hypothesis 3 was rejected. An examination of the means reported in Table 4 shows that freshmen who are academically underprepared experience a greater degree of external control by Powerful Others ($\bar{X}$=19.60) than those who are academically prepared ($\bar{X}$=15.26) for the college experience. The strength of association as indexed by omega squared indicated that 6% of the variance in the Powerful Others dimension of locus of control was accounted for by level of academic preparedness.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference between the external Chance dimension of locus of control of academically prepared and underprepared college freshmen enrolled in a church-supported college.

A one-way analysis of variance was used to analyze the data where the independent variable was academic preparedness (ACT $\geq$ 23, ACT $\leq$ 13) and the dependent variable was Chance, an external dimension of locus of control. The analysis of variance summary table reported in Table 6 indicates a statistically significant ($p < .05$) F ratio; thus, Hypothesis 4 was rejected. The means reported in Table 4 shows that freshmen who are academically underprepared

experience a greater degree of external control by Chance factors ($\bar{X}$=18.72) than those who are academically prepared ($\bar{X}$=13.74) for the college experience.

Table 5

Summary Table of Analysis of Variance of External Locus of Control: Powerful Others

Source	SS	df	MS	F
Between Groups	462.17	1	462.17	7.89*
Within Groups	5619.09	96	58.53	--
Total	6081.26	97	--	--

*p < .05

Table 6

Summary Table of Analysis of Variance of External Locus of Control: Chance

Source	SS	df	MS	F
Between Groups	609.59	1	609.59	14.12*
Within Groups	4143.09	96	43.15	--
Total	4752.68	97	--	--

*p < .05

The strength of association as indexed by omega squared indicated that 12% of the variance in the Chance dimension of locus of control was accounted for by level of academic preparedness.

Summary

The results of this study were presented in this chapter which included the statistical analyses as well as the interpretation of the data collected. A one-way analysis of variance was performed on each of the four dependent variables since a multivariate analysis for this study was not appropriate as was indicated by the small values in the within cells error correlation matrix. The analyses of variance resulted in rejection of null hypotheses 1, 3, and 4, and in failure to reject the second null hypothesis. The results suggest that academically underprepared freshmen experience less self-acceptance and a greater sense of external control by Powerful Others and by Chance factors than those who are academically prepared for college. The results also suggest no significant difference between the two groups in a sense of internal control. Results of the omega squared strength of association test indicates a weak relationship between academic preparedness and the external Powerful Others (.06) dimension of locus of control. A stronger relationship between academic preparedness and both level of Self-acceptance (.18) and the external Chance (.12) dimension of locus of control is indicated.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine ways in which academically prepared and underprepared college freshmen differ in levels of self-acceptance and locus of control. This study involved two groups of college freshmen, those with composite ACT scores of 23 and above, and those with composite ACT scores of 13 and below. The two groups were selected from the freshmen who attended the Fall 1985 freshman orientation at a church-supported college in the Southwest. All freshmen attending orientation were requested to take the California Psychological Inventory and Levenson's locus of control inventory (I, P, and C Scales).

The subjects were 50 freshmen with composite ACT scores of $\geq$ 23 and 48 freshmen with composite ACT scores of $\leq$ 13. The two groups were compared on one measure of self-acceptance (the Self-acceptance subscale from the CPI), and on three dimensions of locus of control (Levenson's I, P, and C Scales). Limitations of this study were: (a) this study included freshmen from one church-supported college; therefore, the results are not generalizable to all academically underprepared college freshmen attending other church-supported colleges, and (b) the Levenson Scales and the Sa subscale have relatively low reliability and validity, thus weakening the ability to determine measurement of locus of control and self-acceptance respectively.

The four hypotheses generated for this study were as follows:

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the self-

acceptance levels of academically prepared and underprepared college freshmen enrolled in a church-supported college.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the internal dimension of locus of control of academically prepared and underprepared college freshmen enrolled in a church-supported college.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference between the external Powerful Others dimension of locus of control of academically prepared and underprepared college freshmen enrolled in a church-supported college.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference between the external Chance dimension of locus of control of academically prepared and underprepared college freshmen enrolled in a church-supported college.

Analysis of variance with an alpha level of .05 was used for the statistical analysis of the data. Statistically significant differences were found for three of the four hypotheses. The academically underprepared group was found to have a lower degree of self-acceptance and greater external control on both the Powerful Others and Chance dimensions of locus of control than the academically prepared group. No statistically significant differences were found between the two groups on the internal dimension of locus of control. Omega squared results showed the strength of association between level of academic preparedness and the dependent variables to be .18 for self-acceptance, .06 for Powerful Others, and .12 for Chance. The question posed in this research was as follows: Are there differences in the self-acceptance and locus of control of academically prepared and academically underprepared college freshmen? Yes, there are differences. The results of this study showed academically underprepared freshmen to have a lower level of self-acceptance, and a higher level of external control than the academically prepared freshmen.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions are offered:

1. The results of this study are similar to other studies reviewed in the literature. For example, the studies of Fink (1962) and Klingelhofer and Hollander (1973) offer empirical evidence to support the contention that self-perception is directly related to academic performance. Bailey's (1971) study concludes that the higher self-concept of college "achievers" provided these students with a more success-oriented image as well as with greater motivation for academic achievement. Flaherty and Reutzel's (1965) study shows the Self-acceptance subscale of the CPI to be a predictor of academic achievement. Underprepared college students are reported by Klingelhofer and Hollander (1973) as often having an external locus of control.

By examining the results of the omega squared strength of association test, it was determined that a much stronger relationship between level of academic preparedness and the external Chance (.12) dimension of locus of control exists than between level of academic preparedness and the external Powerful Others (.06) dimension of locus of control. Thus, in addition to adding support to similar findings in the literature, the results in this study show more specifically than other studies ways in which academically prepared and underprepared students differ, especially on dimensions of external control.

2. In addition to the fact that three of the four analyses calculated in this study were found to be statistically significant, the results of the omega squared strength of association test indicated a fairly strong relationship between level of academic preparedness and both self-acceptance (.18) and the external Chance (.12) dimensions of locus of control. This finding adds to the research significance of this study. According to Linton and Gallo (1975) any time researchers can account for more than 10% of the variance in the dependent

variable as being due to the independent variable they are doing better than most studies in the behavioral sciences.

3. Levenson's (1981) locus of control scales were designed so that each measures a specific dimension of locus of control. A high or low score on one dimension does not imply the reverse on another dimension. For example, a high score on Internality does not mean the individual will automatically have lower scores on the dimensions of Externality. It is interesting that this study found no significant difference between academically prepared and underprepared college freshmen on the measure of Internality. In fact, both groups scored relatively high on this dimension. The greatest differences between these two groups were on both the Powerful Others and the Chance dimensions of external control (the ACT $\leq$ 13 group scored significantly higher than the ACT $\geq$ 23 group on both External dimensions). This finding is consistent with the literature in terms of the external control factor playing such a strong role in the perceptions of underprepared students of their academic environments.

In the literature review, Snow's (1977) study indicated that helping underprepared students develop an internal locus of control should be a primary focus of the counseling process. This study suggests looking more closely at ways of helping underprepared college students to reduce their sense of external control, especially as it relates to their academic environments.

Recommendations for Future Research

Although no significant difference was found between academically prepared and underprepared freshmen on an internal dimension of locus of control, the results of this study do show that academically underprepared freshmen experience significantly less self-acceptance and a significantly greater degree of external control than those who are academically prepared for college. Based on these findings, the following recommendations for future research are made:

1. The sample should be broadened to include not only underprepared freshmen from other church-supported colleges but also from state-supported colleges and universities in order to increase the generalizability of the findings to larger groups.

2. Research should be conducted to determine if there are other ways besides self-acceptance and locus of control in which academically prepared and underprepared college freshmen differ (i.e., responsibility, self-control, flexibility).

3. Longitudinal research should be conducted to determine if counseling services designed to help increase self-acceptance and decrease a sense of external control in academically underprepared freshmen makes a significant difference in the retention rate of these students.

Recommendations for Counselors

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations for counselors are made:

1. Counselors working with academically underprepared students should consider concentrating on helping these individuals develop a more realistic view of powerful others (i.e., administrators, professors, institutional policy) and of fate or chance factors in their lives, especially as these factors relate to their academic environments.

2. Counselors working on college and university campuses should identify these students at the start of their college career and offer them programs and services designed to meet their particular needs. Such programs and services could be vital to the retention of these students.

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VITA 2

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