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Comparative Characteristic Lifestyle Approaches of Persisters and Dropouts in Adult High Schools in Tennessee

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COMPARATIVE CHARACTERISTIC LIFESTYLE APPROACHES

OF PERSISTERS AND DROPOUTS

IN ADULT HIGH SCHOOLS IN TENNESSEE

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In Partial Fulfillment

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Doctor of Education

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by

Samuel J. Shepherd

May 1995

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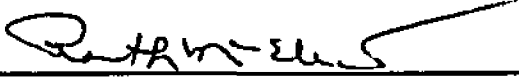
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APPROVAL

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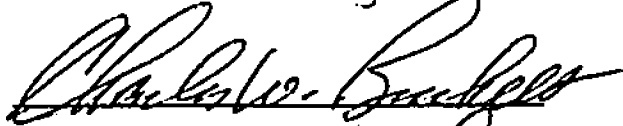
The committee read and examined his dissertation, supervised his defense of it in an oral examination, and decided to recommend that his study be submitted to the Graduate Council Associate Vice-President for Research and Dean, School of Graduate Studies, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis.
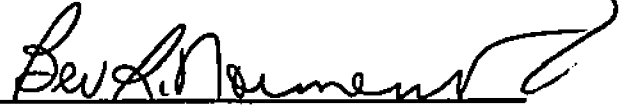
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Signed on behalf of   Associate Vice-President for
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ABSTRACT

COMPARATIVE CHARACTERISTIC LIFE STYLE APPROACHES
OF PERSISTERS AND DROPOUTS
IN ADULT HIGH SCHOOLS IN TENNESSEE

by

Samuel J. Shepherd

The problem of this study was that no data existed on characteristics of life style management as related to persisters and dropouts among adult high school students in the state of Tennessee. The purpose of the study was to determine the characteristic life style approaches most prevalent among persistent enrollees, graduates, and dropouts of selected adult high school programs in Tennessee. Five hundred fifty-nine persisters and 868 dropouts were surveyed by mail, by telephone, or by school site visits. There were 419 participants in the study, 311 persisters and 108 dropouts.

The research was descriptive in nature and utilized data gathered from a survey instrument entitled, Life Style Approaches (LSA) Scale. The instrument was developed by Williams and Long (1991) based on a collection of self-management strategies. Six self-management strategies were identified in the 22 item instrument, and respondents were asked to report to what degree each item was or was not similar to their life styles. The instrument was piloted on 50 adult high school students in Hamblen and Greene Counties who were not in the study sample. Pilot results indicated that reading and comprehension levels were adequate for the students surveyed.

Findings were divided into two categories, demographics and the findings as a result of hypothesis testing. Seventy-three percent of respondents were born after 1960, 88% were Caucasian, and 52% lacked one year or less to graduate. An equal number were married and single, and 55% were employed. Incomes of respondents ranged from less than $5,000 to $40,000; however, 31% of them earned less than $5,000. With regard to hypothesis testing, no significant differences were found between dropouts and persisters in the demographic areas of age, gender, race, marital status, or occupational status. There was a significant difference between dropouts and persisters in the number of years needed to graduate. Of the self-management practices

(performance focus and efficiency, goal directedness, timeliness of task accomplishment, organization of physical space, written plans for change, and verbal support for self-management), only performance focus and efficiency was found to be significantly different between dropouts and persisters. The performance focus and efficiency factor is .closely related to self efficacy, and persisters had a greater degree of self efficacy than did the dropouts reported in this study.

IRB FORM 108   PROTOCOL NO. 93-155s

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

PROJECT TITLE: Comparative Characteristic Life Style Approaches
              of Persisters and Dropouts in Adult High Schools
              in Tennessee.

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Samuel J. Shepherd

The Institutional Review Board has reviewed the above-titled

project on __June 30, 1994__ with respect to the rights and safety

of human subjects, including matters of informed consent and

protection of subject confidentiality, and finds the project

acceptable to the Board.

Anthony J. DeLucia
Chairman, IRB

DEDICATION

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In honor and memory of

those members of my family

who supported me during this study

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The problem of participation and dropout "have been major concerns of adult education researchers, policy-makers, and practitioners who struggle with the problems of recruitment and retention" (Rockhill, 1982, p. 3). Even in the early nineteenth century the dilemmas of participation, attrition, and attendance in adult education were evident in Pole's 1816 account as reported by Birnbaum (1990):

> Wherever adult schools are opened, the friends of such institutions should be fully apprised that it has been found necessary, in order to keep up a due attendance of the learners, to visit them . . . . This we have found a very essential part of our duty; for we should not only be willing to receive and instruct those who apply for admission, but endeavor to use every argument in our power to convince them of the pleasure and important advantage they may derive from being able to read . . . . The ignorant are too inconsiderate of what is for their own benefit, and if they do not make the progress they expected, are liable to sink into discouragement; thence it is that they suffer trivial circumstances to prevent their attendance. (p. 1)

Today, dropout from adult education programs continues to be a problem. In a study by Tracy-Mumford (1990) it was reported that of a population of 1,000 enrollees in an adult high school program, 36% dropped out before completing the first semester course despite an ongoing teacher/coach support system. The U. S. Bureau of the Census reported in 1991, based on 1989 data, that Tennessee ranks forty-eighth in the nation with only 65.4% of its population over age 25 having received a high school diploma.

One of the most difficult tasks program planners have in adult education is helping adults overcome the forces that deter their participation. Referring to the dropout issue in adult programs, Birnbaum (1990) stated that it "becomes particularly critical when considering a segment of the adult population most in need: adult basic education (ABE) and high school completion (HSC) students" (p. 2). Adults who enroll in these programs are four times more likely to drop out than those participants in other adult education programs (Anderson & Darkenwald, 1979).

The dynamics explaining why students stop or continue attending adult education programs remain uncertain, but there is the contention that it may be the result of the nature of the adult learner (a part-time

volunteer participant) (Birnbaum, 1990). Adult students, whether enrolled in ABE or in HSC, frequently have roles other than that of a student. That role may be a worker, a parent, and/or a spouse. Dropping out from an adult high school, where the individual is a part-time student, may not create major role shifts as it does for the high school or college dropout. Adults, therefore, have more freedom to choose whether to participate, not participate, or drop out (Darkenwald, 1981).

When investigating this problem, one should remember that adults enrolled in both adult basic education or adult high school programs are there because they, for one reason or another, have dropped out of secondary programs before attaining a high school diploma. Many times a student, upon realization of the mistake, will express a desire to reenter an educational program, such as an adult high school, designed to allow completion of the necessary requirements for earning a high school diploma. The desire to receive a diploma may be followed by registration and subsequent enrollment into such a facility. However, after attending one or more sessions some students appear less frequently until they drop out of the adult program (Colli, 1987).

Several studies have identified certain factors which tend to deter adults from completing an adult high school program (Valentine &

Darkenwald, 1985; Birnbaum, 1990; and Ehring, 1982), but very few heeded the individual differences of the adult high school student. Many studies have been termed reactional as they "attempt to find out from the dropouts themselves their reasons for leaving and/or their criticisms of the program" (Birnbaum, 1990, p. 51). A major difficulty of this approach is that it is "difficult to locate dropouts and/or get responses from them after the fact" (Birnbaum, p. 50). In addition, Irish (1978) points out that the reliability and bias of the responses is often questionable. Birnbaum (1990) suggests,

> Another way of researching this subject entails surveying or interviewing program graduates to determine what made them successful. Researchers have spent considerable time questioning dropouts and limited time interviewing achievers.
>
> (p. 112)

Completion of the high school diploma is a prerequisite to entering postsecondary programs designed to prepare students for the highly skilled jobs available within this decade. The body of theory in adult education is in short supply (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1990). Given the lack of knowledge in the area of adult high school dropout, it would seem that more research into the problems facing students in adult high school

programs is indicated.

Forty adult high school programs exist today throughout Tennessee and approximately half of them began after the 1992-93 school year. Enrollment data provided by the Tennessee State Department of Education showed that as of the third month attendance reporting period of the 1993-94 school year there were 2,799 students enrolled in adult high schools in Tennessee. Program directors of 12 pilot sites surveyed in April, 1993, reported that dropout from their programs during the 1992-93 school year was approximately 49%. Seven other sites not in the pilot project reported dropout rates in 1992-93 ranging from 18% to 74% with an average rate of 34%.

Statement of the Problem

Thus far there has been little or no research conducted in Tennessee on the adult high school concept to provide a base on which to build future programs. Adult high school programs in Tennessee have grown from fewer than 10 as of January, 1990, to 40 as of June, 1994, with an additional 12 sites in the planning stages for the 1994-95 school year. The research in this area has lagged far behind implementation of new programs. There is little knowledge pertaining to the characteristic life style approaches among individuals who enroll in adult high school

programs and persist to completion of their goal or cease to attend for one reason or another. No data existed on characteristics of life style management as related to persisters and dropouts among adult high school students in the state of Tennessee.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the characteristic life style approaches most prevalent among persistent enrollees, graduates, and dropouts of selected adult high school programs in Tennessee.

Hypotheses

For the purposes of this study, the following null hypotheses were formed:

1. There will be no significant difference between the self-reported scores of persisters and dropouts on performance focus and efficiency, Factor 1 of the Life Style Approaches (LSA) Scale.

2. There will be no significant difference in the self-reported scores of persisters and dropouts on goal directedness, Factor 2 of the Life Style Approaches (LSA) Scale.

3. There will be no significant difference in the self-reported scores of persisters and dropouts on timeliness of task accomplishment, Factor 3 of the Life Style Approaches (LSA) Scale.

4. There will be no significant difference in the self-reported scores of persisters and dropouts on organization of physical space, Factor 4 of the Life Style Approaches (LSA) Scale.

5. There will be no significant difference in the self-reported scores of persisters and dropouts on written plans for change, Factor 5 of the Life Style Approaches (LSA) Scale.

6. There will be no significant difference in the self-reported scores of persisters and dropouts on perceived verbal support for self-management, Factor 6 of the Life Style Approaches (LSA) Scale.

7. There will be no significant difference between persisters and dropouts with regard to age.

8. There will be no significant difference between persisters and dropouts with regard to gender.

9. There will be no significant difference between persisters and dropouts with regard to race.

10. There will be no significant difference between persisters and dropouts with regard to number of years needed to graduate.

11. There will be no significant difference between persisters and dropouts with regard to marital status.

12. There will be no significant difference between persisters and dropouts with regard to occupational status before enrollment in adult high school.

13. There will be no significant difference between persisters and dropouts with regard to annual personal income in the year preceding enrollment in the adult high school.

14. There is no significant difference between the independent variable scores for performance focus and efficiency, goal directedness, timeliness of task accomplishment, organization of physical space, written plans for change, verbal support for self-management, age, gender, race, number of years needed to graduate, marital status, occupational status, annual income, and persistence.

Significance of the Problem

An overwhelming majority of Americans (81%) believe that only through better education will the country find a way to turn around American productivity over the long haul (Harris, 1989). Industry finds itself grappling with an expanding marketplace and growing demand for expedient delivery of an ever-increasingly sophisticated product. A growing number of businesses are facing a severe shortage of skilled workers (Dole, 1990), and many workers in their employ frequently do not

have the necessary basic skills to meet the expectations of the job they presently hold (Martin, 1990). As increased pressures from the public, business, and industry mount on federal, state, and local governments there has developed a need for implementation of new programs of study geared toward high school completion so that adults may pursue postsecondary training designed to upgrade their skills. Before procedures can be implemented to facilitate persistence to complete such programs, the reasons for persistence must be studied, documented, and communicated to all parties involved in educating these vast numbers of Americans.

Limitations of the Study

The scope of this study was limited to adults aged 18 and older who enrolled in 12 adult high schools in Tennessee in the 1992-93 school year and who had maintained enrollment, dropped out, or graduated as of August, 1994.

Assumptions

1. The respondents will be capable of honestly expressing their perception of their life style approach.

2. The respondents' perceptions will be accurate indications of their actual life style approach.

Definitions of Terms

The following definitions apply to this study:

Adult High School - The adult high school is designed for persons at least 18 years of age who are not currently enrolled in a regular school program. After demonstrating proficiency in the required courses, students earn credits based upon Carnegie units and receive a regular high school diploma--not a General Equivalency Diploma (GED) (McCullough, 1993).

Adult Basic Education - A GED program which prepares students to take the GED test for a state-issued high school diploma (Birnbaum, 1990).

Demographics - Background facts about the student, including age, sex, race, marital status, last grade attended in school, and occupational status (Birnbaum, 1990).

Dropout - A student who enrolled in an adult high school program during the 1992-93 school year, attended classes, dropped out by the end of the school term, and did not return.

Life Style Approaches (LSA) - A self-report scale of self management processes containing 22 items subdivided into: performance focus and efficiency, goal directedness, timeliness of task accomplishment,

organization of physical space, written plans for change, and verbal support for self management (Moore, 1991).

Motivators - The reasons for being enrolled in an adult high school cited as important by the student (Birnbaum, 1990).

Persister - A student who enrolled in an adult high school during the 1992-93 school year and maintained enrollment or graduated as of August 1994.

Self-efficacy - People's judgments about their capabilities to execute particular courses of action (Mager, 1992).

Self-management - A set of techniques for directing one's efforts to accomplish certain goals, by using both external and internal support, but the application of that support is directed by the self manager (Moore, 1991).

Situational Circumstances - The problems which might hinder a student's attendance, such as work schedules, family obligations, health problems, availability of child care, and family/peer support systems.

Procedures

The following procedures were executed:

1. A review of research and literature was conducted through ERIC.

2. Experts on the subject of adult high schools in Tennessee were consulted or interviewed.

3. Directors of beginning adult high school pilot sites in Tennessee were consulted.

4. A survey questionnaire pertinent to this study was selected.

5. Twenty-three adult high school site directors were contacted to obtain names and addresses of students presently enrolled in their school, students who had dropped out, and students who had graduated.

6. Data from surveys of graduates and dropouts were compiled to find if significant differences existed between the two groups.

7. Conclusions and recommendations were made using information gathered in the survey and data analysis.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 contains an introduction to the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the hypotheses, the significance of the problem, the limitations, the assumptions, the definition of terms, the procedures, and the overview of the study. Chapter 2 contains a review of related literature. Chapter 3 includes the methodology and procedures used in the study and a description of the programs which were studied.

Chapter 4 contains the results of the study. Chapter 5 contains a summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A review of related literature was conducted to identify relevant literature essential to this study. The first component of the literature review addresses the early attempts by researchers to investigate the concept of participation of adults in programs of education for those who had previously dropped out of the system. The second part of the review provides examination of motivational orientations research, sociodemographic components, and thirdly, literature dealing with deterrents to participation in programs to educate adults. The last section provides a glimpse of future projections of a life-long continuous learning process. A summary is provided which attempts to tie together all of the pivotal components related to participation and persistence in ABE and AHS programs. The inclusion of related literature in ABE and programs of adult literacy serves to broaden the base of knowledge from which generalizations may be made since the populations served by these programs are similar in nature.

Early Efforts

The review of literature revealed several interesting factors which may play a role in nonpersistence in adult programs. This material is

reported in chronological order as nearly as possible to reflect the

thinking of the very earliest authorities on the subject, with a

concentration of literature from 1961 to the present era. Many of the

studies encountered in the latest time frame are related to

nonparticipation or deterrents to participation in adult-related educational

programs. Boshier and Collins (1985) reported that many of the studies

around that time period referred in some way to the work done by C. O.

Houle, who had proposed that adult learners could be classified into one

of three typologies: goal-oriented, learning-oriented, or activity-oriented.

His tripartite typology created considerable interest in the adult education

community, and his works were cited significantly more often by authors

between 1968 and 1977 than most other works in adult education

literature. Houle audiotaped interviews with 22 continuing education

participants in the Chicago area and subsequently classified them into

the groups identified earlier. the goal-oriented learners used education

as a means of accomplishing clear cut objectives; the activity-oriented

learners found meaning in the activity itself; and the learning-oriented

sought knowledge for its own sake (Boshier & Collins, 1985). Cross

(1981), reporting a 1967 conclusion by Miller, stated that the reasons for

the types of programs in which adults participate may be related to their

socioeconomic status. Based on Maslow's hierarchy, those in lower socioeconomic classes may choose programs which meet their survival needs while those in the upper socioeconomic standards may choose programs which lead to self-realization.

When considering programs which lead to self-realization, the literature must include information on an institution which revolutionized American adult education--both religious and secular. It was called "Chautauqua," founded by John Heyl Vincent and Lewis Miller in 1874 (Schurr, 1992). Although the adult students in this early educational institution were primarily from the upper socioeconomic class who were seeking not only an education but also self-realization, the problem of retention was common with that group. Vincent, in 1891, reported that of the 180,000 students who had enrolled, only about 12% completed the full course. the problem of dropouts in adult education has been historical, even in the group seeking the realm of self-realization (Schurr 1992). However, life was different for students of Chautauqua. As pointed out by Mary Lee Morgan, the coordinator of the Daytona Beach Community College District Literacy Center, when she stressed that there was a time in history when being able to read and write was a point of personal pride, but in today's world it is an element of survival. Therefore,

In Florida where 1 of 3 adults are illiterate, to combat the problem which has become of epidemic proportions, noninstructional literacy centers have been established for the identification of potential students, recruitment, and counseling so that history will not continue to repeat itself (Morgan, 1989).

As early as 1926, Lindeman, father of adult education, wrote about the high dropout rate. He said that such failure constitutes an "indictment"--not against intelligence, but rather against the formalism of our educational system (Lindeman, 1989). He also pointed out the impossibility of building wholesome societies "out of partially starved personalities" (p. 36). He said that adult learners need not be starved when they can participate in learning where teachers create an environment that invites, encourages, and helps all students to overcome the barrier of a poor self-concept. In Lindeman's words, "Self is relative to other selves and to the inclusive environment" (Lindeman, p. 50).

The writings of the American pragmatic philosopher and social psychologist George Herbert Mead (Kazemek, 1988) have great relevance for those interested in literacy education or the general education of adult learners who have not completed high school. Mead's concept of the individual and self has pertinent social implications which

should be considered by teachers of adults, programmers, and administrators who help plan programs.

Mead's work has had a profound influence on scholars and practitioners in such fields as philosophy, sociology, and psychology during the past five decades. However, only during the present decade have these ideas become relevant for education in general and for adult education in particular because during this decade we have become more aware of the impact of self-concept on the total learning process (Kazemek, 1988).

Another important historical figure in the adult education movement was Myles Horton (1905 - 1990). Gary J. Conti (1990), in Adult Literacy and Basic Education said that Horton's autobiography, entitled The Long Haul (Horton, Kohl, & Kohl, 1990), provided the best insights into his educational philosophy, commitment to democracy, concern for people, and humor. In The Long Haul, Horton said,

> Education is what happens to the other person, not what comes out
> of the mouth of the educator. You have to posit trust in the learner
> in spite of the fact that the people you're dealing with may not, on
> the surface, seem to merit the trust. If you believe in democracy,
> which I do, you have to believe that people have the capacity

within themselves to develop the ability to govern themselves.

You've got to believe in that potential, and to work as if it were true

in the situation. (Horton, et. al., 1990, p. 131).

He continued by stating that with this trust in the individual, "you have to

start where people are, because their growth is going to be from there,

not from some abstraction of where you or someone else is. People are

not abstract" (p. 131).

Horton surely was speaking to the whole concept of the

importance of the element of self-efficacy as described by Mager and

Bandura. Mager (1992) stated that self-efficacy refers to people's

judgments about their capabilities to execute particular courses of action.

More specifically, he said it "refers to people's beliefs about their ability to

influence the events that affect their lives" (p. 32). Bandura (1977 &1982)

suggested that raising an adult's level of skill through training without

regard to increasing self-efficacy levels will lead to deficient or absent

performance. Bandura further stated,

Judgments of self-efficacy also determine how much effort people

will expend and how long they will persist in the face of obstacles

or aversive experiences . . . . those who have a strong sense of

efficacy exert greater effort to master the challenges. (1982, p. 123)

So strong is the perceived efficacy in individuals, it will influence their performance even when incentives are offered. Kirsch (1982) reported that the success of incentives to produce altered efficacy ratings was tied to the level of anticipated anxiety in subjects, consequently it may be said that self-efficacy is linked to a person's anticipated level of anxiety about perseverance in spite of perceived obstacles. Bandura (1977) supported this notion by offering the following advice for educators:

> Persistence in activities that are subjectively threatening but in fact relatively safe produces, through experiences of mastery, further enhancement of self-efficacy and corresponding reductions in defensive behavior. (p. 191)

Self-efficacy may be considered an important factor in one's motivation to enter programs for self-improvement and continue to pursue a program until a task is accomplished.

Motivational Orientation Literature

Cross (1981) states that Houle's typology study "remains the single most influential motivational study today" (p. 89). According to Scanlan and Darkenwald (1984), most of the research dealing with participation in adult education"has strongly emphasized identifying learner 'types', motives, or 'motivational orientations'" (p. 155) which have not proven

useful in distinguishing participants from nonparticipants. However, Boshier and Collins (1985) disagreed with Scanlan and Darkenwald when they stated that "indeed, the interest in the functions of motivational orientations appear to be accelerating, not diminishing" (Boshier & Collins, p. 127).

In 1982, Darkenwald and Merriam wrote a book entitled, Adult Education: Foundations of Practice, which emphasized that adult education must be more than academics. They stressed that in order to motivate the adult learner there must be more concern with helping them to live more successfully in general, helping them to increase their competencies in their social roles, helping them to gain fulfillment in their personal lives, and assisting them in solving personal and community problems (p. 7).

George's (1979) and Brockett's (1985) works are in direct agreement with Darkenwald and Merriam's 1982 emphasis on the importance of personal fulfillment. George said, "life satisfaction is essentially a cognitive assessment of one's progress toward desired goals (p. 210), and without this assessment the adult learner in most cases will not be motivated because they will not be striving for a goal. Brockett agreed by pointing out that life satisfaction and self-directed

learning readiness share an emphasis on independence. Individuals who are able to take charge and remain in control of their lives are more motivated to meet personal needs as they arise than are those who view themselves as having to be dependent upon others.

If the above is true, then counseling adult learners is just as important as teaching, according to Peggy Davis (1989). She maintains that adult learners share two characteristics: a fear of tests and a lack of self-confidence. She stresses the importance of talking to students in an effort to build self-confidence. She says that constant praise, if nothing else but for the courage to be involved with adult education, is crucial. She goes on to emphasize that encouragement must be built into each segment of learning, helping them to understand that they are not starting over but are simply building on what they already know. Patience is of prime importance. Davis continues by pointing out that if adult learners are going to be motivated to want to continue, building a relationship as a friend must take the place of a teacher-student relationship. She says that helping them to view the total situation with a positive attitude must be a never-ending effort.

Fairgrieve and Jimmerson's (1988) work is consistent with what Davis has said. They surveyed 200 ABE instructors in Washington state

concerning their perceptions of counseling in their programs. It was determined from the results of the survey that instructors generally believe that their counseling abilities were very inferior to their teaching abilities. Part time instructors did much less counseling than did those employed full time. Although instructors were genuinely interested in and committed to their students and felt that counseling was crucial as a tool of motivation, they still felt that counseling needs were not being met. Findings suggest that: specially trained ABE counselors should be available, appropriate inservice training in counseling skills should be available, and more full time instructors should be hired for ABE programs.

Kozol (1980) agreed with Fairgrieve and Jimmerson concerning the need for counseling for adult learners if they are going to be successfully motivated to learn. In the book Prisoners of Silence, it was pointed out that illiterate adults are confronted with a multitude of personal and social difficulties. Fear of discovery, anxiety, and humiliation are just a few. These have often caused them to develop a life style of deception and evasion with an effort to "lie low" and "watch for traps" (Kozol, p. 8).

Belz (1984) maintained that in order to motivate adult learners to

progress and not drop out programs must be designed to be one-to-one

in format in order to be effective, because this approach can be tailored to

meet the individual needs of the adult student (p. 97).

Learning environment, teaching styles, and learning styles are

important factors when attempting to assemble material on effective

motivation of adult learners. George Spear and Donald Mocker (1984)

have put together a wealth of information on these subjects, drawing from

other experts in the area of adult education. They did a qualitative

analysis on the results of a survey from 78 self-directed learners with less

than high school completion who were engaged in a learning project.

The survey had originally been administered to 158 persons.

Spear and Mocker's (1984) interview format was open ended and

probing, and the survey was administered in Washington, D. C.; Miami,

Florida; Chicago, Illinois; Kansas City, Missouri; and San Diego,

California. Their study was built upon the 1971 work of Allen Tough and

the 1981 work of Patricia Cross. Fascination with adult self-directed

learning was set in motion by Allen Tough in 1971. In summarizing a

decade of research by Tough and Cross, Spear and Mocker noted the

narrow scope of knowledge about self-directed learning as a method of

motivating adult learners. In her book, <u>Adults as Learners</u>, Cross pointed

out that, in spite of much research, we still know little about what actually happens during the course of an adult learning project. However, she does offer a chain of response (COR) model which encompasses several major theoretical perspectives of motivation of adult learners.

Spear and Mocker (1984) referred to the research of Kurt Lewin, who has heavily impacted the field of adult education, particularly in the areas of motivation and group dynamics. Lewin referred to a "field" or "life space" of an individual in order to better understand behavior. He believed that the social, psychological, and physical elements, interdependently and as perceived by that person, accounted for their action, change, or locomotion. Lewin's work is often cited as undergirding contemporary theories of motivation that attempt to identify the propelling forces that prompt human beings into action.

Peggy Davis (1989) stressed that a teacher's body language and attitude can be a significant motivational force, or the opposite. She suggested the use of a bulletin board of "positives" than can have an impact, or an inspiring poem, or news clippings about successful adult learners. She went on to suggest a personal "confidence booklet" for each student as an ever present, inexpensive, and simply constructed motivational tool. Notes of praise from the teacher in this booklet are

worth more than money. However, she continued by pointing out that locating a sponsor or "adopter" for each student, someone else or more than one, to show that they care for the student, would magnify teacher attempts at motivation. Checklists for progress are good indicators of accomplishment. Computer records of mastery and error level are less threatening in many cases, according to Davis, than is an instructor.

Allowing students to participate in writing exercises to express their feelings gives them an opportunity to express their fears. Encouraging students to keep a journal would provide a regular opportunity to do this. Encouraging students to read confidence building material such as Guideposts Magazine and books by Norman Vincent Peale or Robert Schuller are easy motivational materials to be read regularly. Davis (1989) stressed that it would be impossible to overemphasize the importance of building self-confidence in adult learners.

In a book by Michael Collins (1987) entitled Competence in Adult Education, a caution is presented that a heavy emphasis on individual, learner centerness in adult education does not address the need for dealing with social values and social interactions. He even argued that planners and instructors should enter the teaching-learning situation with tentative plans which could easily be changed based upon the situation,

Interests, and needs of the participants. He stressed that without this consideration, motivation is dead and dropout rates will continue to climb in adult education.

A study by Conti in 1990 also provided insight about teaching-learning styles in adult education as it related to motivation and achievement. The major finding of this study was that there was a relationship between teaching style in the adult education setting and student achievement. The study indicated that GED students learned more in a structured, teacher-centered environment where the primary goal was to pass the GED. However, a different approach seems to be more appropriate in the basic level and in English as a second language (ESL) settings where the goal is to improve skills in reading, math, and English proficiency. Because of the deficiencies, this is a long term process. In addition, the acquisition of skills cannot be the primary concern, but rather that of raising the adult learner's self-concept since this influences both the way people see themselves and the way they perceive others seeing them. A positive relationship with the teacher is critical as they develop not only academic skills but also interpersonal skills.

Besides providing learning experiences to improve competencies

in reading, writing, and math for 83 participants between the ages of 14 and 21, the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) program included a new focus. The new focus was on cooperative living since the students spent three weeks on the campus of Midwestern University. To evaluate the JTPA program, attitude assessment was equally as important as academic gain. At the conclusion of the program, the attitude of most of the participants was considered to be positive, although most had demonstrated suspicion and lack of trust at the beginning (Thistlethwaite, 1989).

At the conclusion of the JTPA program, the participants had begun to believe in themselves as indicated in expressed interests in continuing into higher levels of adult literacy or GED programs. Another observation was that participants had learned that they could learn from each other, moving from inarticulate silence to vocal, thoughtful, and perceptive expressions of their own ideas (Thistlethwaite, 1989). Although organization and record keeping of adult learning programs must be highly individualized and tailor made to ensure that individual needs are being met, the consensus of the literature has been that emphasis must be placed on social interaction among the adult learners, especially in small groups.

As reported by Kazemek (1988), Mead maintained that the human being is primarily a social being. Therefore, he contended, individual experiences, thoughts, and language must be built around social experiences: they work from the "outside" to the "inside" and not vice versa. When considering Mead's concept of the social nature of human beings, adult education instruction would shift from one-on-one to small groups of adults working in a collaborative manner. Such small circles would stress reciprocity and mutuality among instructors and students. The element of caring would be crucial.

In Kozol's (1980) book Illiterate America, he agreed with Mead's model as he maintained throughout the book that adult learners must be involved in a collective process of shared knowledge rather than always functioning in a situation of one-on-one learning. Kozol stated in that book that he was "convinced that groups of six or seven learners and one instructor represent an ideal unit of instruction" (p. 108).

No collection of literature concerning motivation of the adult learner could be complete without the inclusion of information on the computer as a trusted friend and companion in the 1990s. More and more multimedia innovations are being used to assist the growing number of adults who are struggling with the most basic educational

skills. For example, inmates at Rikers Island Prison in New York City recently began using a multimedia computer to learn how to read (Zimmer, 1993). The director of the program, Beverly Hemmings, had studied the impact of technology on minority education while she was a graduate student and had come to recognize its potential usefulness in fighting the plague of adult illiteracy. She pointed out that because teaching an adult to read is often harder than teaching a child, it can be a source of humiliation for the student and frustration for the teacher. However, a computer doesn't humiliate and is never frustrated; therefore, it can be an excellent tool of motivation as it teaches. In 1993, Hemmings ran a demonstration project for 60 people using the computer at her Street Literacy Clinic in Harlem, New York. No one dropped out, and many enrolled in basic literacy courses afterward. Hemmings commented, "The machine never gets tired, and it doesn't make judgments on you" (Zimmer, p. 36).

John DeWitt is currently director of grants and research for the school district of Escambia County in Pensacola, Florida. A sophisticated computer was installed in that school district a few years ago to facilitate computer assisted instruction. Results have shown substantial gains in reading and math for at-risk students (DeWitt, 1989).

Of the 300 highest risk regular students, only 4 dropped out. The significance of this information for this collection of literature is that similar results were reported for adult students. The retention rate for adult students has been significantly higher, and the number of adults in the program has doubled in the last year, with a reporting of increased attendance and increased completion. The system provides adult literacy courses from Grade 0 through all four levels of the GED. However, the writer stressed that maintaining motivation of students must be a prime concern of instructors in order to ensure future success (DeWitt, 1989).

From a review of the literature concerning the computer in ABE and GED classrooms, one clear inference is noted and that is that computer assisted instruction (CAI) is no panacea in the ABE and GED settings (Rachal, 1985). Although many authors indicate that CAI can be extremely effective, their review of the literature points out that a number of factors must be considered: cost, the hardware syndrome, and administrative and staff commitment. The most encouraging aspects of CAI might come under the headings of individualization, positive reinforcement, and instructional gains (Rachal, 1985).

Dillion and Kincade (1990) offered the same caution as was given by Rachal. They reminded the reader that the scope of the literacy

problem, combined with the special needs of today's adult basic education students, required new approaches to old problems. However, they stressed that technology could not be viewed as a panacea, but it could provide a segment of the interaction necessary for individualization.

In David Harman's book Illiteracy: A National Dilemma (1987), his most salient point is that effective literacy efforts need "a very carefully planned, long term, and sustained instructional effort focused on groups of people in their communities of affiliation and based on constant analysis of their circumstances, needs, and motivations" (p. 104). Of course, these points are the backbone of any successful adult education program, and they are consistent with any carefully planned program of networking or any other organizational plan where people are trying to help other people.

Networking is a term that has become rather common in the last few years. Several authors have called for networking as an interconnecting system for the enhancement of the education of adults who have not been successfully educated in our traditional systems. Such networking can offer opportunities which would influence support, provide communication, share information, and generate funding for adult education. Although caution would have to be taken, it seems that the

time has arrived for serious attention to be put on networking for the basic educational experiences of adult learners (Richardson, 1988).

Networking is built on the principle that no man is an island. It refers to the interconnections that can be created among the many organizations which declare a serious interest in helping uneducated adults to become educated and productive citizens. Kozol (1985) pointed out that the networking approach seems to be an obvious solution to bringing together people who are working to try to achieve the same goal. Contrary to an earlier position which he had taken, Kozol in 1985 encouraged the coalition of all interested parties from educators, business, government, and community members in general for the purpose of providing guidance, support, and motivation to adult learners. Morgan (1989) agreed with the concept of networking such groups as business, industry, and other organizations to help provide funding for adult literacy endeavors.

One specific project shows how educators in a program of adult education, through collaborative efforts, can promote literacy with special objectives of reaching at-risk populations. This one year demonstration project in New England City (Bridgeport, Connecticut) via a major collaborative effort involving black churches, described a delivery of

effective adult literacy education. The project was named Literacy Improvement Needs Collaboration (LINC) and used the Literacy Volunteers of America program as a model for tutor and student training (Lakes & Lewis, 1990). Unlike other adult education systems, this project incorporated members of the community as tutors and assistants in the delivery of the literacy services. The churchgoers were perceived as a surrogate family, providing personal support, familiar surroundings, encouragements, and assistance to learners by establishing a social network.

Influence and visible support from among church related organizations and other social organizations, as well as viable ministerial guidance and neighborhood leadership was demonstrated. This leadership is desperately needed in ghetto areas in order to ameliorate a host of serious social problems including illiteracy, unemployment, crime, school dropout, inadequate housing, teen pregnancy, and drug abuse. The steering committee functioned as an advisory board and was composed of 20 members which represented literacy providers, community members, social service agency staff members, and ministers. The committee worked at recruitment, program effectiveness, and troubleshooting to monitor services and to facilitate outreach efforts. Key

players were church liaisons who Identified lay volunteers and tutors (Lakes & Lewis, 1990).

It is apparent from the information presented in this section on motivation of adult learners that, in addition to understanding learning strategies, instructors of ABE students must be able to assess the clients' psychological attitudes. A profile of motivation, self-esteem, and response styles, as well as the clients' perceptions of teacher-learner relationships, must be analyzed (Belz, 1984).

The primary objective of the process referred to as educational therapy is to help the client to unload all of the psychological burdens in order to become free to learn. Before that freedom is experienced, the adult learner has been shackled by the bonds of insecurity, inadequacy, and the fear of failure. The self-perception that is held is one of low self-esteem and the feeling of incompetence. By leading the client through the process of educational therapy, the client can become free of the prohibitive inhibitions, displaying more initiative and self-control (Belz, 1984). Belz, quoting Jonathan Edwards, wrote,

The plain and obvious meaning of the words freedom and liberty, in common speech, is power, opportunity, or advantage that anyone has to do as he pleases. Or, in other words, his being free

from hindrance or impediment in the way of doing, or conducting in any respect, as he wills . . . . To be free is the property of an agent, who is possessed of powers and faculties, as much as to be cunning, valiant, bountiful, or zealous. But these qualities are the properties of men or persons and not the properties of properties. There are two things which are contrary to this which is called liberty in common speech. One is constraint; the same is otherwise called force, compassion, and coaction; which is a person's being necessitated to do a thing contrary to his will. The other is restraint; which is his being hindered, and not having power to do according to his will. But that which has no will cannot be the subject of these things.

The above points out that liberty may be both constrained and restrained, with constraint meaning that a person's powers, opportunities, or advantages to do what is desired possible bundled, tied, or drawn so tightly together as to have the special compression called force, compulsion, and coercion. While, on the other hand, liberty may be restrained as well, causing one's powers, opportunities, or advantages to be bound fast or to be confined. "The restraint of freedom is the hindering of a person's powers, opportunities, or advantages to do as one needs or

wishes to do. The etymological source of both notions acts as an astringent on the body" (Strange, 1986, p. 123).

Adult education has the potential to be a rigorous human science with the power to enrich and transform human destiny if it addresses constraints and restraints of liberty (Strange, 1986). Freedom to learn is the ultimate source of motivation.

Deterrents to Participation in Adult Education

For a period of time since 1984, other avenues of inquiry began, focusing on deterrents to participation rather than motivational orientations. Scanlan and Darkenwald (1984) stated that painfully few studies had given attention to what factors deter participation. As early as 1975, in a book called Last Gamble on Education, Darkenwald and Knox (as reported by Belz, 1984) noted that budgetary and time constraints left many teachers and counselors unable to become involved in their students' personal problems, although literature in the previous section had clearly pointed out that these problems must be addressed if we are to avoid the bitter cycle of educational failure and dropout.

It has also been previously noted that the notion of self-concept development in ABE programs can be the primary means of increasing retention of students. Teachers must be trained to identify the special

needs of adult learners, most of whom have poor self-concepts which prove to be the major deterrent to success and completion of the program. Skills must be developed in teachers in order to implement a proposed plan of promoting positive self-esteem in adult students. An improved self-concept has been shown in reported studies to significantly improve learning. It is probable that training teachers for this task can provide a better education for students, improve teacher satisfaction, and decrease attrition rates (Criner, 1990).

Students with low self-esteem usually perceive themselves as failures and have not learned to trust anyone connected in any way with the society that they feel rejected them (Criner, 1990). Martin (1983) pointed out that helping students persist might be as simple as encouraging them to "see themselves as able, capable learners" (p. 91).

Poor self-concepts of adults in ABE and AHS classes seem to directly affect and inhibit their willingness to persist and complete their academic programs. Therefore, programmers must include self-concept development methods in teacher training in order for teachers to be able to help students improve their self-esteem, thus improving achievement (Criner, 1990).

Finger (1990) agreed with this assessment by saying that adults

who face a modern, uncertain, and sometimes frightening society must be provided with personal skills development with the goal of improved self-concept to help them raise their level of self-confidence. He concluded by stating "if adult education follows the same paths as traditional education, it will end up, like modernity, in crisis too" (p. 15).

As has already been reported, research on dropouts seeks to identify the differentiating characteristics of dropouts or persisters in order to better match the learning needs of students with environments and experiences of educational programs (Martin, 1990). Martin stressed that students at risk of dropping out appeared to require a concerted effort to increase their academic and social integration, clarification of targeted goals, and increased commitment to the program. At-risk students can be placed in cooperative learning groups and other methods of instruction or approaches which simultaneously increase both academics and social skills. He noted that counseling services should be provided and that teachers and counselors should make more effort to spend more time talking to individual students about their needs, interests, and goals.

Kazemek (1988) pointed out the fact that the attrition rate among instructors and volunteer tutors who worked with adult learners was legendary and scandalous, stating that there were a variety of reasons

that they fail to be successful with their students. Perhaps a very important reason for this frustrating failure is that the instructors don't perceive the students as complex human beings who display varying levels of competency in various situations.

Even the assessment instruments used with adult learners can be intimidating because they focus on weaknesses rather than on strengths, depowering the learner rather than empowering them (Kazemek, 1988). Quite often the materials and methods used with adult students are based upon controlled texts and tightly sequenced skills approaches which can make reading more difficult and is similar to the material which caused the adult to fail in the past. These materials and activities do not provide opportunities for social interaction or for examining and reconstructing the self and the inner problems. Such activities as poetry reading, role playing, and the use of photographs and illustrations would generate discussion and promote oral and written language development. Mead, as reported by Kazemek, stressed that learning experiences for adults must be centered upon helping them to become from within.

Although an increasing number of adults throughout the country are attending basic literacy classes, too many of them are not completing their program. Too many are having to be labeled dropouts, with attrition

rates becoming a serious matter of concern and discussion. In fact, in adult literacy programs an attrition rate of 40% to 60% is average (Bean, Partanen, Wright, & Aaronson, 1989). Because of this problem, they conducted a study to investigate the reasons students had dropped out, with implications for program improvement and student retention strategies.

Although it is difficult to research dropouts because of geographic instability, studies have been conducted which indicated that the primary reasons for dropping out were discouragement with their lack of progress and conflicts with work schedules. Situational reasons were more frequently given than instructional ones. On the other hand, key factors which fostered retention in the program were family support, perceived progress, heightened self-esteem, and a good teacher. Both program and person factors interrelate to impact a student's motivation to continue the program (Bean, et. al., 1989).

When asked to make suggestions as to what would have kept them in the program, 15% of the responses related to the need to be working on a specific self-designed goal. Of the dropouts reached, 40% indicated that they planned to reenter a program when life circumstances allow it. The personal reasons for dropping out most often were: needing

to earn a living, caring for a sick relative, or dealing with personal health problems (Bean, et. al., 1989). The findings of this study suggest a need for literacy programs to provide special training for tutors in order for them to be better prepared to address the special social, emotional, and educational needs of those students who have not been successful in traditional school. Tutors also need additional emotional support training which would enable them to cope with what is potentially an emotionally draining experience. This special support might he a positive impact on the retention of tutors.

Regular evaluation of tutor-student relationship seems to be desirable. Much attention should be given to the establishment or change in tutor-student matches in order for problems in this area not to become a major deterrent. Students should receive special assistance with the identification of goals, with the appropriate materials being matched with the appropriate student goals. Scheduling must be flexible enough to accommodate changing work schedules of students.

Even after students have had to leave the program, contact should remain with regular communication in an effort to offer encouragement to the students, with the hope that they would return to the program. Other agencies, organizations, and volunteers might be enlisted in order to be

able to have the time required to keep communication open with dropouts. Such follow up procedure should be routine to better serve the needs of students who have dropped out. Those involved with programs which attempt to educate adults must continue to search for ways to recapture the initial enthusiasm and interest of the students who desperately need the services (Bean, et. al., 1989).

The theme which runs throughout Cowburn's book Ideology and Community Education (1986), emphasizes the fact that most effective adult education programs succeed in attracting and keeping students for ideological and social reasons rather than strictly academics, but are often hampered because of being labeled as frivolous or unprofessional. Many times this is the case because the program emphasized the social angle at the apparent expense of traditional book work (Cowburn, 1986).

Future Projections

Knowles (1989) went a step beyond the age of technology when he projected what might be expected in the twenty-first century education of adults and other learners. In his book, The Making of an Adult Educator, he referred to a future concept which he called a Lifelong Learning Resource System (LLRS) (p. 132). In this system, education as we know it would no longer exist. The total environment would become

the classroom, with self-directed learning taking place regardless of age

(p. 133). There would be no teachers; but, rather, educational

diagnosticians, educational planning consultants, and resource people,

in addition to administrators, information processors, and coordinators (p.

136).

Perhaps the most important projection presented by Knowles was

that people would become obsdescent--psychologically, socially, and

vocationally--unless they engage in the process of continuous learning.

Workers will have to retrain continuously in order to get and keep a job

because the new skills they will acquire will quickly become obsolete

(Knowles, p. 147). The twenty-first century education, as described by

Knowles as a Lifelong Learning Resource System, would be a

consortium of all of the following learning resources in the community.

> Institutions: specialized educational institutions, religious
> institutions, health and social service agencies, governmental
> agencies, museums, and libraries
> Voluntary organizations: labor unions, consumer and producer
> cooperatives, civic and fraternal societies, agricultural
> organizations, youth organizations, political organizations, and
> professional societies
> Economic enterprises: business and industrial firms, farms,
> markets, and trade associations
> The media
> Episodic events: fairs, exhibits, trips, rituals, and anniversary
> celebrations
> Environmental resources: parks, reserves, zoos, forests, deserts,
> lakes, and streams

People: elders, specialists, families, and neighborhoods
(pp. 132-133)

Summary

The review of related literature consisted of four general areas
pertinent to the study: early attempts to examine persistence to
completion of adult programs; the motivational orientations and
sociodemographic components related to adult participation in GED,
HSC, and literacy programs; literature dealing with deterrents to
participation, and future projections for the twenty-first century. As can be
seen, persistence to task completion, as well as dropout behavior, is
multifaceted and very complex. The underlying theme, however, seems
to be related to the notion that the self-efficacy of an individual may be the
influence needed to propel him through, around, and over barriers to
continuation and completion of planned tasks. Church (1992) best
summed up this idea with a quote from Bandura's works: "Self-efficacy
influences initiation of behavior, effort, and persistence in the face of
obstacles and achievement" (p. 498). To meet the ever-changing needs
of the adult population, educators, business and industry, or anyone
responsible for continuing education for adults should be aware of these
factors when undertaking an educational initiative for this group.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

This chapter presents the methodology of the study. It includes the following: research design, procedures, the instrument, population, sample, measurement of variables, and data analysis.

Research Design

This study used descriptive research methods which involved the collection of data through a survey of the chosen sample. There were no perceived internal or external threats to the validity of the study.

Procedures

The procedures used in this study were as follows:

1. Using data provided by the Adult Basic Education Department and the Department of School Approval of the Tennessee State Department of Education, the researcher identified 23 systems with adult high schools in Tennessee which enrolled students during the 1992-93 school year.

2. A field test of the survey instrument entitled Life Style Approaches (LSA) Scale was conducted with 50 adult high school enrollees in Hamblen and Greene Counties to determine if the reading level was appropriate for the subjects. The directors/teachers in these

programs were asked to administer these instruments to students who were currently enrolled in their programs with the exception of those students currently enrolled who had begun in the 1992-93 school year. They were provided a checklist by which they could note any questions with which a student had trouble reading or understanding. Those were noted with an explanation of the problems encountered so the question could be changed if a need was indicated. Only one respondent in the pilot expressed any difficulty, questioning the need for marking the race alternatives. Otherwise, there were no other difficulties reported by directors. The checklist is included in Appendix D.

3. After approval from the East Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board, an explanatory letter and survey were mailed to the 23 identified site directors along with a self-addressed, stamped return envelope (copies of the survey and letter are included in Appendices A and B respectively). After 10 days the researcher made telephone contact to systems whose directors had not responded.

4. Fourteen responses were received, seven of which contained the requested names and addresses of persisters and dropouts. The remaining seven respondents granted permission to use the enrollment and dropout information if the researcher would compile the data. The

researcher visited five of the seven sites and compiled the names and addresses of persisters and dropouts from site records.

5. Based on the information provided, the researcher developed a computerized list of 1,427 student names and addresses which were generated on mailing labels, and surveys were mailed to 559 persisters and 868 dropouts in 12 counties.

6. After 10 days, follow-up surveys were sent to nonrespondents.

7. The researcher, in further attempts to contact nonrespondents, visited four sites and administered surveys to identified students at the school setting, and attempted telephone contact with an additional 211 students.

8. Data from 419 usable surveys were entered into SPSS/PC+ (Norusis, 1992) by hand. SPSS/PC+ was used as the vehicle for statistical calculations. The hypotheses were tested and findings analyzed.

Population

The population to which the researcher intended to generalize was the approximately 2,945 students enrolled in 23 adult high schools which enrolled students during the 1992-93 school year. According to the Tennessee Department of Education, approximately 50% of the group

are dropouts and 50% are persisters. The population consisted of adult high school persisters who had maintained enrollment, adult high school graduates enrolled during the 1992-93 school year, and those students who dropped out after their enrollment during 1992-93.

Sample

There were two groups in this study. The first group (persisters) was comprised of adult high schoolers who enrolled in 1992-93 and were either maintaining enrollment or had since graduated. The second group (dropouts) was inclusive of adult high schoolers who enrolled in 1992-93 but had dropped out and remained out of the program.

The Tennessee State Department of Education, Department of Adult Education, reported that during the 1992-93 school year 23 counties reported enrollment of 2,945 adult high school students. Directors across the state reported that the dropout rate was approximately 50%. Consequently, each population total contained 1,473 students. Based on a .05 level of confidence each sample should have contained 500 students, including oversampling, which was done in order to ensure that the required number of surveys were returned. A total of 559 persisters and 868 dropouts were surveyed by mail, by telephone, or on site.

The parameter of selecting adult high school programs which had been in operation for at least two years (1992-93 and 1993-94) served to identify students who could be considered persistent as they maintained enrollment for at least one year or did so until they completed the requirements for graduation. Secondly, the long term approach identified true dropouts, as many adult high school students tend to attend for a short while, drop out for several weeks, then reenter.

Measurement of Variables

The survey consisted of a written survey form entitled Life Style Approaches (LSA), developed by Williams and Long (1991). The survey consisted of 22 items with a modified version of a Likert 1-5 response scale. The scale provides a choice regarding the respondent's perception of how similar each item is to their personal lifestyle by choosing from a choice range of: very different from me, somewhat different from me, uncertain, somewhat similar to me, and very similar to me. The response alternatives were scored on a 0-4 scale, with 0 representing the alternative least consistent with the application of each self-management practice and 4 representing the alternative most consistent with that practice. Negatively worded items were scored in a

reverse direction from the positively worded items. A demographics section of the survey contained eight items.

Reliability for the instrument was established by studies done at the University of Tennessee by Moore (1991). The overall scale of Cronbach's Alpha was calculated as .80.

The Instrument

The Life Styles Approaches (LSA) instrument was developed by Williams and Long based on a collection of self management strategies described in their book Manage Your Life (4th ed.) (1991). The strategies were translated into a 48 item instrument which was administered to 735 college students and nonstudent adults ranging in age from 18 to 65. Based on subject responses, six clusters of self-management strategies emerged after subjection to a principal components analysis with varimax notation. As a result of a three stage factor analysis, 22 items representing the six factors were included in the concurrent and discriminant validity assessment. The eigenvalues for these six factors ranged from 1.41 to 2.43 (Williams, et. al., 1991).

1. Factor 1, Performance Focus and Efficiency, assesses self-reported skill in priority tasks and concentration on them until completed. Items comprising this subscale are: (2) When confronted with many

different things to do, I have difficulty deciding what is most important to

do; (3) After making a decision about what is most important to do at any

given time, I easily get sidetracked from that activity; (6) I have difficulty

judging how long it will take me to complete a task; (16) I have difficulty

matching various tasks with my energy level; and (21) When I deviate

from my selected goal, I have a hard time getting back on track.

2. Factor 2, Goal Directedness, measures the perceived clarity

with which one views personal goals and objectives.   Items comprising

this subscale are: (1) In most situations, I have a clear sense of what

behaviors would be right or wrong for me; (11) I have a clear sense of

what I most want to experience in my life; (15) I'm confused as to the kind

of personal qualities I want to develop in my life; and (18) I have little idea

as to what I most want to achieve in my life.

3. Factor 3, Timeliness of Task Accomplishment, indicates whether

one begins a task promptly and works efficiently until it is finished. Items

making up this subscale are: (4) Once I decide what is most important to

do at any given time, I start on that task right away; (13) I complete tasks

at the time I say I'm going to complete them; (17) I subdivide big tasks into

a series of smaller tasks; and (20) I complete tasks well in advance of

deadlines.

4. Factor 4, Organization of Physical Space, measures whether one keeps work and living areas well organized. Items comprising this subscale are: (10) I keep my work space well organized; (19) I actively work to make the place I spend a lot of time more attractive; and (22) My living space is quite messy.

5. Factor 5, Written Plans for Change, measures self-reported written goals and plans. Items comprising this subscale are: (5) I write down the pros and cons of any behavior change I am considering; (8) I have written down my life goals; and (14) I seldom write down my yearly goals.

6. Factor 6, Verbal Support for Self-Management, indicates whether one uses self-talk and seeks support from others when attempting a self-change project. Items comprising this subscale are: (7) I seldom analyze what I am saying to myself; (9) When I begin a personal change project, I generally keep my plans to myself; and (12) I seldom ask for feedback from others about behaviors I need to change and how best to change those behaviors.

Internal consistency coefficients for each LSA factor ranged from .38 to .71. Internal consistency measures for the factors are shown in Table 1. Cronbach's Alpha for the entire LSA was .80. The comparison

variable most strongly related to the LSA factors was general self efficacy with a Cronbach's Alpha of .86 (Moore, 1991).

Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) (Norusis, 1988) was used for data analysis. The specific test used for Hypotheses 1-6 and 10 was the t-test for independent means. The specific test for Hypotheses 7-9 and 11-13 was the chi-square test. A discriminant

Table 1

Internal Consistency Coefficients for LSA Factors

Factor		Alpha
1	Performance focus and efficiency	.71
2	Goal directedness	.66
3	Timeliness of task accomplishment	.64
4	Organization of physical space	.71
5	Written plans for change	.60
6	Verbal support for self management	.38

analysis was conducted for Hypothesis 14. These tests were used to determine whether differences existed among self-reported life style approaches of adult high school persisters and dropouts who enrolled in high school completion programs during the 1992-93 school year.

The data analysis was reported in relation to the null hypotheses. A present Alpha of .05 was used to test each hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1: There will be no significant difference between the self-reported scores of persisters and dropouts on performance focus and efficiency, Factor 1 of the LSA. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS/PC+) and a t-test for independent means was used to determine if a significant difference existed between dropouts and persisters with regard to this factor.

Hypothesis 2: There will be no significant difference in the self-reported scores of persisters and dropouts on goal directedness, Factor 2 of the LSA. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS/PC+) and a t-test for independent means was used to determine if a significant difference existed between dropouts and persisters with regard to this factor.

Hypothesis 3: There will be no significant difference in the self-reported scores of persisters and dropouts on timeliness of task

accomplishment, Factor 3 of the LSA. The Statistical Package for the

Social Sciences (SPSS/PC+) and a t-test for independent means was

used to determine if a significant difference existed between dropouts

and persisters with regard to this factor.

Hypothesis 4: There will be no significant difference in the self-

reported scores of persisters and dropouts on organization of physical

space, Factor 4 of the LSA. The Statistical Package for the Social

Sciences (SPSS/PC+) and a t-test for independent means was used to

determine if a significant difference existed between dropouts and

persisters with regard to this factor.

Hypothesis 5: There will be no significant difference in the self-

reported scores of persisters and dropouts on written plans for change,

Factor 5 of the LSA. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

(SPSS/PC+) and a t-test for independent means was used to determine if

a significant difference existed between dropouts and persisters with

regard to this factor.

Hypothesis 6: There will be no significant difference in the self-

reported scores of persisters and dropouts on perceived verbal support

for self-management, Factor 6 of the LSA. The Statistical Package for the

Social Sciences (SPSS/PC+) and a t-test for independent means was

used to determine if a significant difference existed between dropouts
and persisters with regard to this factor.

Hypothesis 7: There will be no significant difference between
persisters and dropouts on the LSA with regard to age. The Statistical
Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS/PC+) and a chi-square test was
used to determine if a significant difference existed between dropouts
and persisters with regard to this factor.

Hypothesis 8: There will be no significant difference between
persisters and dropouts with regard to gender. The Statistical Package
for the Social Sciences (SPSS/PC+) and a chi-square test was used to
determine if a significant difference existed between dropouts and
persisters with regard to this factor.

Hypothesis 9: There will be no significant difference between
persisters and dropouts on the LSA with regard to race. The Statistical
Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS/PC+) and a chi-square test was
used to determine if a significant difference existed between dropouts
and persisters with regard to this factor.

Hypothesis 10: There will be no significant difference between
persisters and dropouts on the LSA with regard to number of years
needed to graduate. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

(SPSS/PC+) and a t-test for independent means was used to determine if a significant difference existed between dropouts and persisters with regard to this factor.

Hypothesis 11: There will be no significant difference between persisters and dropouts on the LSA with regard to marital status. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS/PC+) and a chi-square test was used to determine if a significant difference existed between dropouts and persisters with regard to this factor.

Hypothesis 12: There will be no significant difference between persisters and dropouts with regard to occupational status before enrollment in adult high school. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS/PC+) and a chi-square test was used to determine if a significant difference existed between dropouts and persisters with regard to this factor.

Hypothesis 13: There will be no significant difference between persisters and dropouts with regard to annual personal income of respondents in the year preceding enrollment in the adult high school. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS/PC+) and a chi-square test was used to determine if a significant difference existed between dropouts and persisters with regard to this factor.

Hypothesis 14: There is no significant difference between the independent variable scores for performance focus and efficiency, goal directedness, timeliness of task accomplishment, organization of physical space, written plans for change, verbal support for self-management, age, gender, race, number of years needed to graduate, marital status, occupational status, annual income, and persistence. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS/PC+) was used to conduct a discriminate analysis for this hypothesis to determine if the LSA has any value in predicting persistence.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

The research questions and hypotheses presented in Chapter 1
are addressed in Chapter 4, which includes the results and findings
obtained from the data gathered in this study. The purpose of this study
was to determine the characteristic life style approaches most prevalent
among persistent enrollees, graduates, and dropouts of selected adult
high school programs in Tennessee.

A total of 1,625 adult high school students who enrolled during the
1992-93 school year were surveyed. Surveys were mailed to 1,427
students, 192 were delivered on site and administered by the researcher
or the site director, and 6 respondents were surveyed by telephone.
There were 868 dropouts and 757 persisters who were surveyed. A total
of 419 usable surveys were returned--311 persisters and 108 dropouts.

Demographic Data

Demographic data were collected from the respondents' profile
information which was requested on the survey instrument entitled, Life
Style Approaches (LSA) Scale. Demographic data were reported by
persisters and dropouts for the following categories: birth year, gender,

race, number of years needed to graduate, previous attendance in another adult high school or GED program, marital status, occupational status before enrollment, and annual personal income. Persisters who had graduated were asked if they had enrolled in another educational program since graduation, and if so to identify whether it was a two year college, four year college, technical school, or other educational institution.

Although the total respondent birth years ranged from 1926 through 1977, the majority of both persisters and dropouts were born after 1960. Dropouts were younger than the persisters, with 85% of dropouts born after 1960 as opposed to 75% of the persisters. Both groups contained more than twice the number of females than males, and 88% of both persisters and dropouts were white. Nine percent of the persisters were black, and 10% of dropouts were black. Two percent of the total respondents reported their race as being other (Table 2).

The respondents reported a range of zero to four years needed to graduate when they enrolled. Persisters lacked fewer years to graduate than did dropouts. Fifty-eight percent of the persisters lacked one year or less to graduate as opposed to only 39% of the dropouts. Of the total number of respondents, 42% were married and the remaining 58%

Table 2

Frequency of Responses by Respondent Birth Year, Gender, Race, Number Years
Needed to Graduate, and Previous Attendance in Another HSC/GED Program

		Persisters		Dropouts	
		_f_	_%_	_f_	_%_
Birth year	1960-present	232	75	91	85
	1943-1959	55	18	14	13
	Before 1943	21	7	2	2
		308	100	107	100
Gender	Male	98	32	36	33
	Female	212	68	71	66
	Missing	0	0	1	1
		310	100	108	100
Race	White	272	88	95	88
	Black	27	9	11	10
	Other	9	2	0	0
	Missing	2	1	2	2
		310	100	108	100
Years to graduate	0-1	178	58	42	39
	2-3	79	26	46	43
	4+	22	7	20	10
	Missing	31	9	0	0
		310	100	108	100
Marital status	Single	135	43	52	48
	Married	132	43	43	40
	Divorced	41	13	10	9
	Other	2	1	2	2
	Missing	0	0	1	1
		310	100	108	100

were single, divorced, or widowed. More dropouts (48%) than persisters (43%) were single. Forty-three percent of the persisters were married and 40% of the dropouts reported their marital status as married. Tabulations for these factors are reported in Table 2.

Only one-fourth of the total respondents reported having enrolled in other GED or HSC programs prior to enrollment in their current programs. Of the graduates who reported entry into postsecondary programs after graduation, 70% chose two-year colleges or technical schools. Nine percent of graduates chose four-year college programs (Table 3).

One-third of the persisters reported their occupations as skilled laborer while one-fourth of the dropouts reported themselves as skilled laborers. An equal number of each group reported themselves as unskilled laborers, but more dropouts (27%) than persisters (22%) were unemployed at the time of enrollment. With regard to income, persisters had slightly higher incomes than dropouts. Fifty-one percent of the persisters earned less than $10,000, and 55% of the dropouts earned less than $10,000. The mean annual income of persisters was $7,319, and the mean income for dropouts was $6,580. Tabulations for occupation and income are reported in Table 3.

Table 3

Frequency of Responses by Respondent Marital Status, Occupational Status Before
Enrollment, Annual Income, and Enrollment in Programs After Graduation

		Persisters		Dropouts	
		_f_	_%_	_f_	_%_
Marital status	Single	135	45	52 ·	48
	Married	132	42	43	40
	Divorced	41	12	10	9
	Other	2	1	2	2
	Missing	_0_	_0_	_1_	_1_
		310	100	108	100
Occupational status before enrollment	Unemployed- seeking work	49	16	19	18
	Unemployed-not seeking work	20	6	10	9
	Employed-skilled	92	30	26	24
	Employed-unskilled	85	27	30	28
	Homemaker	42	14	16	15
	Other	18	6	4	4
	Missing	_4_	_1_	_3_	_2_
		310	100	108	100
Annual Income	Under $5,000	87	28	43	40
	$ 5,000 - $ 9,000	71	23	16	15
	$10,000 - $14,999	68	22	22	20
	$15,000 - $19,999	36	12	14	13
	$20,000 - $24,999	13	4.	5	5
	$25,000 - $29,999	9	3	1	1
	$30,000 - $34,999	5	2	2	2
	$35,000 +	4	1	0	0
	Missing	_17_	_5_	_5_	_4_
		310	100	108	100
	Mean Income	$7,319		$6,580	

Survey Statement Responses

The survey form entitled Life Style Approaches (LSA) Scale

consisted of 22 statements concerning the subjects' perception of their

self-management practices. There were 11 positive and 12 negative

statements (see Appendix E). A modified version of a Likert 1-5

response scale provided a choice regarding the respondents' perception

of how similar each item was to their personal lifestyle. They chose from

a range of: very different from me, somewhat different from me,

uncertain, somewhat similar to me, and very similar to me. The response

alternatives were scored on a 0-4 scale, with 0 representing the

alternative least consistent with the application of each self-management

practice and 4 representing the alternative most consistent with that

practice. Negatively worded items were scored in a reverse direction

from the positively worded items.

Survey Question 1: In most situations I have a clear sense of what

behaviors would be right or wrong for me. Both persisters and dropouts

reported that they had a very clear sense of what behaviors would be

right or wrong for them. Ninety-three percent of the persisters chose

either somewhat similar or very similar to them, and 87% of the dropouts

reported either somewhat similar or very similar to them (Table 4).

Table 4

Frequency of Response of Persisters and Dropouts to LSA Question 1

(Clear Sense of Right and Wrong)

Response	Value	Persisters		Dropouts	
		f	%	f	%
Very different from me	0	6	2.0	4	3.0
Somewhat different from me	1	5	1.5	3	3.0
Uncertain	2	9	3.0	5	5.0
Somewhat similar to me	3	75	24.0	25	23.0
Very similar to me	4	214	69.0	69	64.0
No response		1	.5	2	2.0
		310	100.0	108	100.0

Survey Question 2: When confronted with many things to do, I have difficulty deciding what is most important to do. Persisters and dropouts alike reported having some difficulty putting tasks into priority from most important to least important. Sixty-percent of the persisters and 58% of the dropouts reported having difficulty in this area (Table 5).

Table 5

Frequency of Response of Persisters and Dropouts to LSA Question 2
(Difficulty In Prioritizing Tasks)

Response	Value	Persisters		Dropouts	
		f	%	f	%
Very different from me	0	40	13.0	15	14.0
Somewhat different from me	1	64	21.0	19	17.5
Uncertain	2	20	6.0	11	10.0
Somewhat similar to me	3	77	25.0	31	29.0
Very similar to me	4	109	35.0	31	29.0
No response		0	0.0	1	1.0
		310	100.0	108	100.0

Survey Question 3: After making a decision about what is most

important to do at any given time, I easily get sidetracked from that

activity. Once a decision was made about what to do at a given time,

dropouts reported having less difficulty with staying on track than did

persisters. Almost half of the dropouts indicated that the statement was

somewhat different or very different from them. Only one-fourth of

persisters chose somewhat or very different from them (Table 6).

Survey Question 4: Once I decide what is most important to do at

any given time, I start on that task right away. Dropouts and persisters

alike tended to start on a task right away after they had chosen it as a

Table 6

Frequency of Response of Persisters and Dropouts to LSA Question 3

(Getting Sidetracked)

Response	Value	Persisters		Dropouts	
		f	%	f	%
Very different from me	0	28	9.0	16	15.0
Somewhat different from me	1	57	18.0	31	29.0
Uncertain	2	17	6.0	6	5.5
Somewhat similar to me	3	96	31.0	26	24.0
Very similar to me	4	112	36.0	28	26.0
No response		0	0.0	1	.5
		310	100.0	108	100.0

priority item. Neither persisters nor dropouts reported having difficulty in this area more than 19% of the time (Table 7).

Survey Question 5: I write down the pros and cons of any behavior change I am considering. Fewer than 30% of dropouts and persisters reported the self-management practice of writing down the

Table 7

Frequency of Response of Persisters and Dropouts to LSA Question 4 (Starting Immediately on Task After Choice is Made)

Response	Value	Persisters		Dropouts	
		f	%	f	%
Very different from me	0	10	3.0	7	7.0
Somewhat different from me	1	37	12.0	13	12.0
Uncertain	2	14	5.0	3	3.0
Somewhat similar to me	3	99	32.0	36	33.0
Very similar to me	4	150	48.0	48	44.0
No response		0	0.0	1	1.0
		310	100.0	108	100.0

pros and cons of any anticipated behavior change. Sixty-two percent of the persisters and 63% of the dropouts chose either very similar to them or somewhat similar to them when answering this item (Table 8).

Survey Question 6: I have difficulty judging how long it will take me to complete a task. Responses from dropouts and persisters alike

Table 8

Frequency of Response of Persisters and Dropouts to LSA Question 5 (Written Pros and Cons)

Response	Value	Persisters		Dropouts	
		f	%	f	%
Very different from me	0	135	44.0	55	51.0
Somewhat different from me	1	57	18.0	43	12.0
Uncertain	2	31	10.0	12	11.0
Somewhat similar to me	3	56	18.0	19	18.0
Very similar to me	4	30	9.7	8	7.0
No response		1	.3	1	1.0
		310	100.0	108	100.0

ranged across the entire choice spectrum for this survey item. However, 59% of the persisters and 52% of the dropouts reported difficulty in judging how long a task, once begun, would take to complete. Dropouts had stronger disagreement with the survey item than did persisters (Table 9).

Table 9

Frequency of Response of Persisters and Dropouts to LSA Question 6 (Difficulty Judging Completion Time)

Response	Value	Persisters		Dropouts	
		f	%	f	%
Very different from me	0	26	8.0	15	14.0
Somewhat different from me	1	62	20.0	25	23.0
Uncertain	2	39	13.0	11	10.0
Somewhat similar to me	3	82	27.0	27	25.0
Very similar to me	4	101	32.0	29	27.0
No response		0	0.0	1	1.0
		310	100.0	108	100.0

Survey Question 7: I seldom analyze what I am saying to myself

regarding problem areas in life. More than half of the persisters (53%)

who responded to this item seldom analyzed what they said to

themselves regarding problem areas in life. Dropouts reported more of

a tendency to analyze their self-talk than did persisters as 36% of them

were either somewhat similar or very similar to that survey item (Table

10).

Table 10

Frequency of Response of Persisters and Dropouts to LSA Question 7
(Infrequent Analysis of Self-Talk)

Response	Value	Persisters		Dropouts	
		f	%	f	%
Very different from me	0	39	12.0	12	11.0
Somewhat different from me	1	62	20.0	27	25.0
Uncertain	2	44	14.0	14	13.0
Somewhat similar to me	3	64	21.0	23	21.0
Very similar to me	4	99	32.0	30	28.0
No response		2	1.0	2	2.0
		310	100.0	108	100

Survey Question 8: I have written down my life goals. Dropouts differed markedly from persisters in having written life goals. Only 13% of persisters reported very different from themselves on this item, but 44% of the dropouts chose this alternative. More than half (52%) of persisters chose very similar or somewhat similar to them for this item, as compared to 32% of the dropouts (Table 11).

Table 11

Frequency of Response of Persisters and Dropouts to LSA Question 8 (Written Life Goals)

Response	Value	Persisters		Dropouts	
		f	%	f	%
Very different from me	0	39	13.0	47	44.0
Somewhat different from me	1	62	20.0	16	15.0
Uncertain	2	44	14.0	9	8.0
Somewhat similar to me	3	64	21.0	16	15.0
Very similar to me	4	99	31.0	18	17.0
No response		2	1.0	2	1.0
		310	100.0	108	100.0

Survey Question 9: When I begin a personal change project, I generally keep my plans to myself. More than half of both persisters and dropouts tended to make their plans for self-change projects known to others. Both persisters and dropouts 34% of the time chose either somewhat similar or very similar to them on this item (Table 12).

Table 12

Frequency of Response of Persisters and Dropouts to LSA Question 9 (Confidentiality of Plans)

Response	Value	Persisters		Dropouts	
		f	%	f	%
Very different from me	0	102	33.0	28	26.0
Somewhat different from me	1	80	26.0	30	28.0
Uncertain	2	19	6.0	11	10.0
Somewhat similar to me	3	54	17.0	16	15.0
Very similar to me	4	54	17.0	21	19.0
No response		1	1.0	2	2.0
		310	100	108	100.0

Survey Question 10: I keep my work space well organized.

Approximately three-fourths of both dropouts and persisters chose

somewhat similar or very similar to them for this item. Less than one-

fourth of both groups reported having a messy work space (Table 13).

Table 13

Frequency of Response of Persisters and Dropouts to LSA Question 10

(Well Organized Work Space)

Response	Value	Persisters		Dropouts	
		f	%	f	%
Very different from me	0	25	8.0	14	13.0
Somewhat different from me	1	36	12.0	10	9.0
Uncertain	2	14	4.0	4	4.0
Somewhat similar to me	3	93	30.0	37	34.0
Very similar to me	4	142	46.0	42	39.0
No response		0	0.0	1	1.0
		310	100.0	108	100.0

Survey Question 11: I have a clear sense of what I most want to experience in my life. Both persisters and dropouts reported that they were very similar to this item. Forty-eight percent of persisters and 46% of the dropouts answered this alternative. Both groups had a clear sense of what they wanted to experience in life (Table 14).

Table 14

Frequency of Response of Persisters and Dropouts to LSA Question 11 (Clear Sense of Life Experiences)

Response	Value	Persisters		Dropouts	
		f	%	f	%
Very different from me	0	19	6.0	5	5.0
Somewhat different from me	1	15	5.0	12	11.0
Uncertain	2	36	12.0	15	14.0
Somewhat similar to me	3	91	29.0	25	23.0
Very similar to me	4	149	48.0	50	46.0
No response		0	0.0	1	1.0
		310	100.0	108	100.0

Survey Question 12: I seldom ask for feedback from others about

behaviors I need to change and how best to change those behaviors.

The response choices of dropouts were strikingly similar for the practice

of asking for feedback from others on needed behavior changes. As can

be seen in Table 15, percentages for each choice are within a few points

of each other for dropouts and persisters except for the very similar to me

category. It would seem that dropouts have a slightly greater tendency

Table 15

Frequency of Response of Persisters and Dropouts to LSA Question 12
(I Seldom Ask for Feedback From Others Regarding Needed Behavior
Changes)

Response	Value	Persisters		Dropouts	
		f	%	f	%
Very different from me	0	73	23.0	27	25.0
Somewhat different from me	1	81	26.0	25	23.0
Uncertain	2	33	10.0	10	9.0
Somewhat similar to me	3	58	19.0	25	23.0
Very similar to me	4	64	20.5	19	18.0
No response		1	.5	2	2.0
		310	100.0	108	100.0

than persisters to ask for feedback from others regarding their own behavior changes.

Survey Question 13: I complete tasks at the time I say I'm going to complete them. Approximately three-fourths of both persisters and dropouts reported that they completed tasks at the time they said they were going to complete them. Fewer than one-fourth of either group chose somewhat different or very different from them on this item, and it may be said that dropouts and persisters perceived themselves as completing tasks on time the majority of the time (Table 16).

Table 16

Frequency of Response of Persisters and Dropouts to LSA Question 13 (Timely Completion of Tasks)

Response	Value	Persisters		Dropouts	
		f	%	f	%
Very different from me	0	22	7.0	11	10.0
Somewhat different from me	1	34	11.0	14	13.0
Uncertain	2	23	7.0	7	6.0
Somewhat similar to me	3	129	42.0	46	43.0
Very similar to me	4	101	32.0	29	27.0
No response		1	1.0	1	1.0
		310	100.0	108	100.0

Survey Question 14: I seldom write down my yearly goals. A majority of dropouts and persisters (60% and 57% respectively) chose either the slightly different or very different choice alternatives for this negatively-worded question, which indicated that they tended to write down yearly personal goals. The choice for dropouts differed from their response to life goals in survey question eight (Table 17).

Table 17

Frequency of Response of Persisters and Dropouts to LSA Question 14 (I Seldom Write Down My Yearly Goals)

Response	Value	Persisters		Dropouts	
		f	%	f	%
Very different from me	0	94	30.0	40	37.0
Somewhat different from me	1	83	27.0	25	23.0
Uncertain	2	15	5.0	7	7.0
Somewhat similar to me	3	49	16.0	10	9.0
Very similar to me	4	69	22.0	25	23.0
No response		0	0.0	1	1.0
		310	100.0	108	100.0

Survey Question 15: I'm confused as to the kind of personal qualities I want to develop in my life. Sixty-three percent of the persisters reported being either somewhat similar or very similar to this statement. Dropouts tended to report more difficulty with deciding what personal qualities they wanted most to develop in their life, as 70% reported that the statement was either somewhat similar or very similar to them (Table 18).

Table 18

Frequency of Response of Persisters and Dropouts to LSA Question 15 (Confused About Desired Personal Qualities)

Response	Value	Persisters		Dropouts	
		f	%	f	%
Very different from me	0	33	11.0	11	10.0
Somewhat different from me	1	41	13.0	14	13.0
Uncertain	2	41	13.0	7	7.0
Somewhat similar to me	3	70	23.0	46	43.0
Very similar to me	4	125	40.0	29	27.0
No response		0	0.0	0	0.0
		310	100.0	108	100.0

Survey Question 16: I have difficulty matching various tasks with my energy level. Very little differences were noted between dropouts and persisters in this area. Slightly more than one-third of each group chose the very similar alternative. However, dropouts reported less difficulty with matching tasks to their energy level than did persisters (Table 19).

Table 19

Frequency of Response of Persisters and Dropouts to LSA Question 16 (Reported Difficulty Matching Tasks With Energy Level)

Response	Value	Persisters		Dropouts	
		f	%	f	%
Very different from me	0	31	10.0	13	12.0
Somewhat different from me	1	54	17.0	26	24.0
Uncertain	2	46	15.0	12	11.0
Somewhat similar to me	3	73	24.0	17	16.0
Very similar to me	4	106	34.0	39	36.0
No response		0	0.0	1	1.0
		310	100.0	108	100.0

Survey Question 17: I subdivide big tasks into a series of smaller

tasks. More than half of dropouts and persisters reported the practice of

subdividing large tasks into smaller ones by choosing either the

somewhat similar or the very similar alternative. Very little differences

were noted between the two groups on this survey item (Table 20).

Table 20

Frequency of Response of Persisters and Dropouts to LSA Question 17

(Subdivision of Big Tasks Into Smaller Ones)

Response	Value	Persisters		Dropouts	
		f	%	f	%
Very different from me	0	45	15.0	24	22.0
Somewhat different from me	1	49	16.0	15	14.0
Uncertain	2	43	14.0	13	12.0
Somewhat similar to me	3	107	34.0	34	32.0
Very similar to me	4	66	21.0	21	19.0
No response		0	0.0	1	1.0
		310	100.0	108	100.0

Survey Question 18: I have little idea as to what I most want to achieve in my life. Persisters and dropouts reported results very similar to each other for each alternative. Seventy-one percent of persisters reported having little idea as to what they most wanted to achieve in their lives, but 68% of the dropouts reported having this difficulty (Table 21).

Table 21

Frequency of Response of Persisters and Dropouts to LSA Question 18 (Little Idea of Desired Achievement)

Response	Value	Persisters		Dropouts	
		f	%	f	%
Very different from me	0	41	13.0	14	13.0
Somewhat different from me	1	26	8.0	17	16.0
Uncertain	2	26	8.0	8	7.0
Somewhat similar to me	3	69	23.0	21	19.0
Very similar to me	4	148	48.0	47	44.0
No response		0	0.0	1	1.0
		310	100.0	108	100.0

Survey Question 19: I actively work to make the place where I spend a lot of time more attractive. Most persisters and dropouts alike (48% and 46% respectively) reported that the practice of keeping the place where they spent a lot of time neat and orderly, as they chose the very similar alternative on this item (Table 22).

Table 22

Frequency of Response of Persisters and Dropouts to LSA Question 19 (Actively Work to Make Workplace Attractive)

Response	Value	Persisters		Dropouts	
		f	%	f	%
Very different from me	0	16	5.0	10	9.0
Somewhat different from me	1	26	8.0	12	11.0
Uncertain	2	21	7.0	7	7.0
Somewhat similar to me	3	98	32.0	28	26.0
Very similar to me	4	148	47.7	50	46.0
No response		1	.3	1	1.0
		310	100.0	108	100.0

Survey Question 20: I complete major tasks well in advance of deadlines. Persisters and dropouts both were under the impression that they completed tasks well in advance of deadlines. The responses between the two groups were very similar. More than 60% of both groups chose either the very similar or the somewhat similar alternative for this item (Table 23).

Table 23

Frequency of Response of Persisters and Dropouts to LSA Question 20 (Completion of Tasks in Advance of Deadlines)

Response	Value	Persisters		Dropouts	
		f	%	f	%
Very different from me	0	33	10.7	12	11.0
Somewhat different from me	1	51	17.0	15	14.0
Uncertain	2	35	11.0	10	9.0
Somewhat similar to me	3	119	38.0	38	35.0
Very similar to me	4	71	23.0	32	30.0
No response		1	.3	1	1.0
		310	100.0	108	100.0

Survey Question 21: When I deviate from my selected goal, I have a hard time getting back on track. Although 16% of the persisters chose the undecided alternative, fewer persisters than dropouts chose the very different or somewhat different alternatives on this survey question. However, more than half of each group reported difficulty getting back on track when they deviated from a selected goal (Table 24).

Table 24

Frequency of Response of Persisters and Dropouts to LSA Question 21 (Difficulty Getting Back on Track After Being Sidetracked)

Response	Value	Persisters		Dropouts	
		f	%	f	%
Very different from me	0	36	12.0	21	19.0
Somewhat different from me	1	60	19.0	30	28.0
Uncertain	2	49	16.0	2	2.0
Somewhat similar to me	3	92	29.7	28	26.0
Very similar to me	4	72	23.0	26	24.0
No response		1	.3	1	1.0
		310	100.0	108	100.0

Survey Question 22: My living space is quite messy. Choice

percentages for dropouts were identical on three of the five alternatives.

Both persisters and dropouts (60% and 55% respectively) saw

themselves as having a messy living space (Table 25). The survey

statement response section has presented the subjects' perceptions of

their self-management practices for each item on the Life Style

Table 25

Frequency of Response of Persisters and Dropouts to LSA Question 22

(Messy Living Space)

Response	Value	Persisters		Dropouts	
		f	%	f	%
Very different from me	0	15	5.0	10	9.0
Somewhat different from me	1	28	9.0	10	9.0
Uncertain	2	8	3.0	3	3.0
Somewhat similar to me	3	71	23.0	25	23.0
Very similar to me	4	188	60.0	59	55.0
No response		0	0.0	1	1.0
		310	100.0	108	100.0

Approaches Scale. They responded to 11 positive and 12 negative statements on a modified Likert 1-5 response scale.

Descriptive Data

Hypothesis 1 stated that there would be no significant difference between the self reported scores of persisters and dropouts on performance focus and efficiency, Factor 1 of the LSA. Performance focus and efficiency assesses the self-reported skill in prioritization of tasks and concentration on them until completed. Six items comprised this subscale: Questions 2, 3, 6, 16, and 21. A t-test for independent means (pooled variance) was used to test the hypothesis. The two-tailed probability was .022 and therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Persisters scored significantly higher than dropouts for this particular item (Table 26).

Hypothesis 2 stated that there would be no significant difference between the self reported scores of persisters and dropouts on goal directedness, Factor 2 of the LSA. Goal directedness measures the perceived clarity with which one views personal goals and objectives. Items comprising this subscale were Questions 1, 11, 15, and 18 on the LSA scale. A t-test for independent means (separate variance) was

Table 26

Results of T-Test for Hypothesis 1: Difference in Self-Reported Scores of

Persisters and Dropouts on Performance Focus and Efficiency

Group 1 Mean	Group 2 Mean	F Value	Prob.	Pooled Variance t	Pooled Variance Prob.	Separate Variance t	Separate Variance Prob.
12.5922	11.3458	1.16	.339	2.30	.022*	2.22	.028

*Indicates a significant difference at Alpha <.05.

Group 1, persisters. Group 2, dropouts.

conducted with a resulting 2-tailed probability of .079. The null

hypothesis was retained (Table 27).

Hypothesis 3 stated that there would be no significant difference in

the self reported scores of persisters and dropouts on timeliness of task

accomplishment, factor 3 of the LSA. Timeliness of task accomplishment

indicates whether one begins a task promptly and works efficiently until it

is finished, and included subscale items 4, 13, 17, and 20 of the LSA. A

t-test for independent means (pooled variance) was conducted to

Table 27

Results of T-Test for Hypothesis 2: Difference in Self-Reported Scores of
Persisters and Dropouts on Goal Directedness

Group 1 Mean	Group 2 Mean	F Value	Prob.	Pooled Variance t	Prob.	Separate Variance t	Prob.
12.1909	11.4811	1.38	.037	1.91	.057	1.77	.079

Group 1, persisters. Group 2, dropouts.

determine if a significant difference existed for this factor. The two-tailed

pooled variance estimate was .316, and the null hypothesis was retained

(Table 28).

Hypothesis 4 stated that there would be no significant difference in

the self reported scores of persisters and dropouts on organization of

physical space, Factor 4 of the LSA. The Organization of Physical Space

subscale measures whether one keeps work and living areas well

organized and included items 10, 19, and 22 on the LSA. A t-test for

independent means (pooled variance) was conducted to test this

Table 28

Results of T-Test for Hypothesis 3: Difference in Self-Reported Scores of

Persisters and Dropouts on Timeliness of Task Accomplishment

Group 1 Mean	Group 2 Mean	F Value	Prob.	Pooled Variance t	Prob.	Separate Variance t	Prob.
10.7078	10.3271	1.35	.052	1.00	.316	.93	.351

Group 1, persisters. Group 2, dropouts.

hypothesis. The two-tailed probability of pooled variance estimate was

.088, but the difference was not sufficient to reject the null hypothesis,

and the null hypothesis was retained (Table 29).

Hypothesis 5 stated that there would be no significant difference in

the self reported scores of persisters and dropouts on written plans for

change, Factor 5 of the LSA. Factor 5 measured self reported written

goals and plans and included Items 5, 8, and 14 of the LSA. A t-test for

independent means (pooled variance) was administered to test this

hypothesis. A resultant 2-tailed probability of pooled variance estimate

was .107, and the null hypothesis was retained (Table 30).

Table 29

Results of T-Test for Hypothesis 4: Difference in Self-Reported Scores of

Persisters and Dropouts on Organization of Physical Space

Group 1 Mean	Group 2 Mean	F Value	Prob.	Pooled Variance		Separate Variance	
				t	Prob.	t	Prob.
9.2848	8.7290	1.41	.024	1.71	.088	1.57	.118

Group 1, persisters. Group 2, dropouts.

Table 30

Results of T-Test for Hypothesis 5: Difference in Self-Reported Scores of

Persisters and Dropouts on Written Plans for Change

Group 1 Mean	Group 2 Mean	F Value	Prob.	Pooled Variance		Separate Variance	
				t	Prob.	t	Prob.
4.8188	4.2430	1.08	.628	1.61	.107	1.59	.115

Group 1, persisters. Group 2, dropouts.

Hypothesis 6 stated that there would be no significant difference in the self reported scores of persisters and dropouts on perceived verbal support for self management, Factor 6 of the LSA. Factor 6 indicated whether one used self talk and sought support from others when attempting a self change project. The items comprising this subscale are Items 7, 9, and 12 of the LSA. A t-test for independent means (pooled variance) was used to test the null hypothesis, and a resultant 2-tailed probability of pooled variance estimate was .904. The null hypothesis was retained (Table 31).

Table 31

Results of T-Test for Hypothesis 6: Difference in Self-Reported Scores of Persisters and Dropouts on Verbal Support for Change

Group 1 Mean	Group 2 Mean	F Value	Prob.	Pooled Variance t	Prob.	Separate Variance t	Prob.
5.8567	5.8942	1.05	.756	-.12	.904	-.12	.905

Group 1, persisters. Group 2, dropouts.

Hypothesis 7 stated that there would be no significant difference between persisters and dropouts with regard to age. A chi-square test was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference with regard to age. The chi-square value of 3.1 exceeded the .05 level of confidence, and the null hypothesis was retained (Table 32).

Table 32

Results of Chi-square Test for Hypothesis 7: Difference in Self-Reported Scores of Persisters and Dropouts With Regard to Age

Group		Age		Total
	18-33	34-50	Over 50	
Persisters	232	55	21	308
	72%	80%	91%	74%
Dropouts	91	14	2	107
	28%	20%	9%	26%
Column total	323	69	23	415
Percent	100%	100%	100%	100%

Chi-square = 3.1; p > .05.

Hypothesis 8 stated that there would be no significant difference between persisters and dropouts with regard to gender. A chi-square test was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference with regard to gender. The chi-square was 1.51 with a p-value of .698, and the null hypothesis was retained (Table 33).

Table 33

Results of Chi-square Test for Hypothesis 8: Difference in Self-Reported Scores of Persisters and Dropouts With Regard to Gender

Group	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Persisters	98	212	310
	73%	75%	74%
Dropouts	36	71	107
	27%	25%	26%
Column total	134	283	417
Percent	100%	100%	100%

Chi-square = .151; p >.05.

Hypothesis 9 stated that there would be no significant difference ·
between persisters and dropouts with regard to race. A chi-square test
was conducted to determine if a significant difference existed for this
factor by grouping respondents into white and non-white categories. The
p-value was .71364, and consequently the null hypothesis was retained
(Table 34).

Table 34

Results of Chi-square Test for Hypothesis 9: Difference in Self-Reported
Scores of Persisters and Dropouts With Regard to Race

Group	Race		Total
	White	Non-white	
Persisters	272	36	308
	74%	77%	74.4%
Dropouts	95	11	106
	26%	23%	25.6%
Column total	367	47	414
Percent	100%	100%	100%

Chi-square = .13467; p >.05.

Hypothesis 10 stated that there would be no significant difference between persisters and dropouts with regard to the number of years needed to graduate. A t-test for independent means (pooled variance) was conducted with a resultant 2-tailed probability of pooled variance estimate of .008, and the null hypothesis was rejected (Table 35).

Hypothesis 11 stated that there would be no significant difference between persisters and dropouts with regard to marital status. A chi-

Table 35

Results of T-Test for Hypothesis 10: Difference in Self-Reported Scores of Persisters and Dropouts With Regard to Number of Years Needed to Graduate

Group 1 Mean	Group 2 Mean	F Value	Prob.	Pooled Variance t	Prob.	Separate Variance t	Prob.
1.4731	1.8586	1.11	.564	-2.65	.008*	-2.72	.007

*Indicates a significant difference at Alpha <.05.

Group 1, persisters. Group 2, dropouts.

square test was conducted with a resultant significance value of .21925.

The null hypothesis was retained for the marital status factor (Table 36).

Hypothesis 12 stated that there would be no significant difference

between persisters and dropouts with regard to occupational status

Table 36

Results of Chi-square Test for Hypothesis 11: Difference in Self-Reported

Scores of Persisters and Dropouts With Regard to Marital Status

Group	Marital status		Total
	Single	Married	
Persisters	178	132	310
	74%	75%	74%
Dropouts	63	43	106
	26%	25%	26%
Column total	241	175	416
Percent	100%	100%	100%

Chi-square = 3.035; p >.05.

before enrollment in adult high school. A chi-square test was conducted

with a resultant chi-square of 4.5251 and a p-value of .3396. The null

hypothesis was retained for this factor (Table 37).

Table 37

Results of Chi-square Test for Hypothesis 12: Difference in Self-

Reported Scores of Persisters and Dropouts With Regard to

Occupational Status Before Enrollment

Group	Occupational status				Total
	Unemployed	Skilled Employment	Unskilled Employment	Other	
Persisters	69	92	85	60	306
	70%	78%	74%	75%	74.3%
Dropouts	29	26	30	20	106
	30%	22%	26%	25%	25.7%
Column total	98	118	115	80	412
Percent	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Chi-square = 4.5251; p >.05.

Hypothesis 13 stated that there would be no significant difference

between persisters and dropouts with regard to annual personal income

in the year preceding enrollment in adult high school. A chi-square test

was conducted to determine if a significant difference existed for this

factor. The chi-square value was 1.657 with a significance of .437. The

null hypothesis was retained for the annual personal income of

respondents (Table 38).

Hypothesis 14 stated that there would be no significant difference

between the independent variable scores (performance focus and

efficiency, goal directedness, timeliness of task accomplishment,

organization of physical space, written plans for change, verbal support

for self-management, age, gender, race, number of years needed to

graduate, marital status, occupational status, annual income) and

persistence. A discriminant analysis was conducted to determine if self

reported scores on the LSA could be used to accurately classify

individuals as persisters or dropouts. For purposes of this test, 348 cases

were processed--258 persisters and 90 dropouts. Comparisons of

means for the two groups showed that persisters scored higher on five of

the six factors identified as subscales on the LSA: performance focus

and efficiency, goal directedness, timeliness of task accomplishment,

organization of physical space, and written plans for change. Only with regard to verbal support for self management did the mean score for dropouts exceed the score for persisters (Table 39).

Table 38

Results of Chi-square Test for Hypothesis 13: Difference in Self-Reported Scores of Persisters and Dropouts With Regard to Annual Personal Income

Group	Income			Total
	<$5000-$9999	$10000-$24999	>$25000	
Persisters	158	117	18	293
	73%	74%	86%	74%
Dropout	59	41	3	103
	27%	26%	14%	26%
Column total	217	158	21	396
Percent	100%	100%	100%	100%

Chi-square = 1.657; p >.05.

Hypothesis 14 stated that there would be no significant difference between the independent variable scores (performance focus and efficiency, goal directedness, timeliness of task accomplishment, organization of physical space, written plans for change, verbal support for self-management, age, gender, number of years needed to graduate, and annual income) and persistence. A discriminant analysis was conducted to determine if self reported scores on the LSA could be used to accurately classify individuals as persisters or dropouts. For purposes of this test, 348 cases were processed--258 persisters and 90 dropouts. Comparisons of means for the two groups showed that persisters scored higher on five of the six factors identified as subscales on the LSA: performance focus and efficiency, goal directedness, timeliness of task accomplishment, organization of physical space, and written plans for change. Only with regard to verbal support for self management did the mean score for dropouts exceed the score for persisters (Table 39).

Included in the comparison of mean scores were demographic factors. Dropouts were two years older than persisters on the average; had more years to go until graduation than persisters; and had a slightly lower income level than persisters. More persisters were married and had slightly higher rates of prior enrollments into adult programs. The

Table 39

Comparison of Mean Scores of Dropouts and Persisters With Regard to
Factors Identified as Subscales and Demographic Variables of the Life
Style Approaches (LSA) Scale

	Mean score	
Subscale factor	Persisters	Dropouts
Performance focus and efficiency	12.81	11.50
Goal directedness	12.31	11.56
Timeliness of task accomplishment	10.67	10.37
Organization of physical space	9.21	8.81
Written plans for change	4.90	4.01
Verbal support	5.95	5.96

	Mean score	
Demographic Variable	Persisters	Dropouts
Birth year	65.86	67.21
Years to graduation	1.46	1.87
Previous enrollment in similar programs	3.34	3.30
Income	2.64	2.42

comparative means for demographic variables and LSA factors are also compiled in Table 39.

A further analysis included in the discriminant function was the standardized discriminant function and the Wilks' Lambda (u statistic). The Wilks' Lambda significance results confirmed the test findings for Hypotheses 1 and 10. A significant difference existed between persisters and dropouts for performance focus and efficiency and the number of years needed to graduate. Additionally, the Wilks' Lambda test showed a significant difference between persisters and dropouts with regard to written plans for change, which was not the case with the results of the t-test for independent means. The difference in results of the two testing strategies may be explained by the fact that in the discriminant analysis, 71 fewer cases were used because they did not contain data on all of the factors tested in each individual case (Table 40).

A comparison of the predicted classification of persisters and dropouts was conducted in the analysis. It was found that only 63.51% of the grouped cases were correctly classified as determined by mean scores on all variables of the LSA. Based on these results, it was determined that the scores on the LSA for these groups was not sufficient

justification for predicting dropout or persistence solely on the basis of
the instrument (Table 41).

Table 40

Standardized Discriminant Function Coefficients and Wilks' Lambda for Each Subscale
Factor and Demographic Variable of the Life Style Approaches (LSA) Scale

Factor	Function	Wilks' Lambda	f	Significance
Performance focus and efficiency	.42938	.98541	5.124	.0242*
Goal directedness	.12934	.99026	3.404	.0659
Timeliness of task accomplishment	-.18566	.99851	.5168	.4727
Organization of physical space	.00482	.99628	1.291	.2567
Written plans for change	.51386	.98525	5.181	.0234*
Verbal support	-.16745	1.00000	.8512E-03	.9767
Birth year	-.22421	.997071	1.038	.3090
Gender	-.05900	.99996	.1559E-01	.9010
Years to graduate	-.64362	.98026	6.969	.0087*
Income	.14866	.99648	1.229	.2684

*Significant difference at < .05.

Table 41

Prediction of Group Classification Based on Mean Scores of the Life
Styles Approaches (LSA) Scale

Actual group	# cases	Predicted group membership			
		Group 1	%	Group 2	%
1. Persisters	258	169	65.5	89	34.5
2. Dropouts	90	38	42.2	52	57.8

Grouped cases correctly classified: 63.51%

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS,

AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 5 contains summary, findings, conclusions, and

recommendations based on the results of this study.

Summary

No data existed on characteristics of life style management as

related to persisters and dropouts among adult high school students in

the state of Tennessee. Five hundred fifty-nine persisters and 868

dropouts were surveyed by mail, by telephone, or by school site visits.

There were 419 participants in the study, 311 persisters and 108

dropouts. The research was descriptive in nature and utilized data

gathered from a survey instrument entitled Life Style Approaches (LSA)

Scale. Six self management strategies were identified in the 22-item

instrument, and respondents were asked to report to what degree each

item was or was not similar to their life styles.

One thousand six hundred fifty-four surveys were delivered with

419 responses, which represented a 25% rate of return. The low rate of

return was due to the transient nature of this group of people. Three

hundred forty-three surveys were returned with no forwarding address.

The researcher attempted to match 211 names and addresses of nonrespondents in telephone directories, and all except 15 subjects were either not listed or their phones had been disconnected.

Respondents reported their perceptions of how they approached self management in the following areas: performance focus and efficiency, goal directedness, timeliness of task accomplishment, organization of physical space, written plans for change, and verbal support for self-management. Demographic data gathered on dropouts and persisters included age, gender, race, number of years needed to graduate, marital status, occupational status before enrollment, and annual personal income. A discriminant analysis was conducted to determine if the instrument, Life Style Approaches (LSA) Scale, had predictive value in determining whether or not a high school completion program applicant would persist to completion of a program once enrolled.

Findings

The findings were divided into two sections: demographics and the findings as a result of hypothesis testing. Seventy-three percent of respondents were born after 1960, and the majority of both the persister and dropout groups were born after that date. However, dropouts tended

to be younger than persisters. Both groups contained more than twice the number of females than males, and 88% of both groups were Caucasian. Fifty-eight percent of the persisters reported having one year or less until graduation, and 39% of dropouts reported having one year or less to graduate. Approximately one-fourth (26%) of respondents had not enrolled in GED or HSC programs prior to enrollment in adult high school.

Forty-five percent of respondents were single, and 42% were married. Twenty-three percent were unemployed, and 55% were employed--28% being employed in skilled jobs. More persisters than dropouts were employed in skilled jobs, and more of the dropouts were unemployed at the time of program entry. Thirty-one percent of respondents earned less than $5,000, and the mean income fell in the $10,000 to $14,999 range. Total annual incomes ranged from $5,000 to $40,000. The mean annual income for persisters was $7,319, and the mean annual income for dropouts was $6,580. Sixty-six percent of the graduates reported non-entry into post-secondary programs; however, of the graduates who reported entry into post-secondary programs, 70% chose two-year colleges and 9% chose four-year colleges.

Hypothesis 1 stated that there would be no significant difference between the self-reported scores of persisters and dropouts on performance focus and efficiency, Factor 1 of the LSA. Performance focus and efficiency reflects self-reported skill in judging what is important to do at any given time and then maintaining on that task until it is completed. A t-test of independent means (pooled variance) was conducted with a resultant two-tailed probability of pooled variance estimate of .022. The null hypothesis was rejected at the .05 level of confidence. A difference does exist between persisters and dropouts on performance focus and efficiency in that persisters scored significantly higher than dropouts for this particular factor.

Hypothesis 2 stated that there would be no significant difference in the self-reported scores of persisters and dropouts on goal directedness, Factor 2 of the LSA. Goal directedness represents individuals' perceptions of whether their actions are guided by clearly defined priorities and goals. A t-test of independent means (separate variance) was conducted and a resultant significance variance estimate of .057 was found. At the .05 level of confidence, the null hypothesis was retained.

Hypothesis 3 stated that there would be no significant differences in the self-reported scores of persisters and dropouts on timeliness of task accomplishment. Timeliness of task accomplishment relates to the self-reported tendency to initiate work on a task and move through the task in a timely fashion. A t-test of independent means (pooled variance) was conducted with a resultant two-tailed probability of pooled variance estimate of .316. At the .05 level of confidence, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Hypothesis 4 stated that there would be no significant difference in the self-reported scores of persisters and dropouts on organization of physical space, Factor 4 of the LSA. Organization of physical space measures the extent to which individuals reported keeping their work and living space organized, clean, and attractive. A t-test for independent means (pooled variance) was conducted with a resultant two-tailed probability of pooled variance estimate of .088. At the .05 level of confidence, this result was insufficient to reject the null hypothesis.

Hypothesis 5 stated that there would be no significant difference in the self-reported scores of persisters and dropouts on written plans for change, Factor 5 of the LSA. Written plans for change assesses the self-reported practice of writing down goals and plans for change. A t-test for

independent means (pooled variance) with a resultant two-tailed pooled

variance estimate of .107 proved insufficient to reject the null hypothesis.

Hypothesis 6 stated that there would be no significant difference in

the self-reported scores of persisters and dropouts on perceived verbal

support for self-management, Factor 6 of the LSA. This factor indicates

whether or not one uses verbal support from others in self-management.

A t-test for independent means (pooled variance) was conducted, and a

resultant two-tailed probability of pooled variance estimate was .904.

The null hypothesis was retained.

Hypothesis 7 stated that there would be no significant difference

between persisters and dropouts with regard to age. A chi-square test

was conducted, and the chi-square value of 3.1 exceeded the critical

value of .05; therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Hypothesis 8 stated that there would be no significant difference

between persisters and dropouts with regard to gender. A chi-square

test was conducted, and the resultant chi-square was 1.51 with a p-value

of .698. The null hypothesis was retained.

Hypothesis 9 stated that there would be no significant difference

between persisters and dropouts with regard to race. A chi-square test

was conducted with a resultant chi-square value of .135 and a p-value of

.715. Based on the .05 level of confidence, the null hypothesis was retained.

Hypothesis 10 stated that there would be no significant difference between persisters and dropouts with regard to number of years needed to graduate. A t-test for independent means (pooled variance) was conducted, and a two-tailed probability of pooled variance estimate of .008 was sufficient to reject the null hypothesis based on a .05 level of confidence.

Hypothesis 11 stated that there would be no significant difference between persisters and dropouts with regard to marital status. A chi-square test was conducted, and the value of 3.035 and the p-value of .219 proved insufficient evidence to reject the null. The null hypothesis was accepted.

Hypothesis 12 stated that there would be no significant difference between persisters and dropouts with regard to occupational status before enrollment in adult high school. A chi-square test was conducted with a resultant chi-square value of 4.575 and a p-value of .339. The result was insufficient to reject the null hypothesis.

Hypothesis 13 stated that there would be no significant difference between persisters an dropouts with regard to annual personal income in

the year preceding enrollment in the adult high school. A chi-square test was conducted with a resultant chi-square value of 1.657 and a significance of .437. The null hypothesis was accepted.

Hypothesis 14 stated that there would be no significant difference between the independent variable scores (performance focus and efficiency, goal directedness, timeliness of task accomplishment, organization of physical space, written plans for change, verbal support for self-management, age, gender, race, number of years needed to graduate, marital status, occupational status, annual income) and persistence. To test this hypothesis a discriminant analysis was conducted to determine if subjects could be accurately classified as persisters or dropouts based solely on the mean scores of the Life Style Approaches (LSA) Scale. The percent of grouped cases correctly classified was 63.51%. Based on the result, it was determined that the self-reported mean scores on the instrument were not sufficient to justify classification of individuals as persisters or dropouts. The instrument scores alone should not be the only parameter in screening for persistence or dropout from high school completion programs. Additional data such as the Wilks' Lambda and the discriminant function coefficients confirmed the hypotheses testing results. Performance focus

and efficiency and years needed to graduate showed the higher coefficients and were also significant at the .05 level using the Wilks' Lambda (u statistic). One difference was noted in that the Wilks' Lambda and a high standardized coefficient indicated a significant difference between persisters and dropouts with regard to written plans for change. This did not confirm the t-test result because 71 fewer cases were used in the discriminant function analysis.

Conclusions

Based on the results of the study, the following conclusions are proposed:

1. Persisters tend to score higher on all except one of the subscale factors of the Life Style Approaches (LSA) Scale, and that was verbal support for self-management.

2. Dropouts are slightly younger than persisters.

3. The distance to goal as measured by the number of years to graduation is higher for dropouts than for persisters.

4. Self-efficacy, as measured by the performance focus and efficiency factor of the LSA, is greater for persisters than dropouts.

5. There is little difference between dropouts and persisters with regard to whether one keeps work and living areas well organized.

6. The majority of adult learners perceive themselves as having a clear sense of what behaviors would be right and wrong for them.

7. Adult learners have difficulty deciding what is most important to do when confronted with many things to do. Additionally, when they do decide what is most important, the majority begin right away on the task. However, adult learners are easily sidetracked from that action plan, and have difficulty returning to the activity.

8. Adult learners do not tend to write down plans and goals for behavioral changes, although the majority state that they have a clear sense of what they want to experience in their life.

9. Most adults complete tasks in a timely fashion.

10. Gender of individuals is not a factor in persistence.

11. The annual personal income for persisters is higher than that of dropouts, but about one-half of adult high school students earn less than $9,000 a year.

12. The majority of adult students in Tennessee are employed, and about 3 out of 10 can be classified as skilled laborers.

13. The self-reported mean scores on the <u>Life Style Approaches (LSA) Scale</u> should not be used as the sole source for predicting whether or not an enrollee will drop out of programs before completion.

14. Marital status is not a factor in persistence.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made for further research:

1. A study of persistence and dropout using qualitative techniques should be conducted to investigate this subject in more detail than is possible quantitatively.

2. More research on the notion of self efficacy and its relationship to self-esteem should be conducted for adult learning.

3. Local school systems and the Tennessee Department of Education should establish accurate records and follow-up studies of adult learners.

4. This study should be expanded to a larger population of adult learners and the Life Style Approaches (LSA) Scale administered and tested for predictive value.

5. When research efforts are attempted, more cooperation is needed for HSC directors to furnish necessary information to those research efforts so that more data can be added to the body of knowledge in this area.

6. A concerted effort by HSC personnel should be made to develop more effective teacher/coach relationships with students so that

opportunity for success Is Increased, self-motivation is enhanced, and resultant self-efficacy is internalized.

7. HSC programs should include a combination of didactical, small group problem solving, and computer aided instructional techniques to make up the delivery system.

8. HSC curriculums should include, In addition to Carnegie unit instruction, techniques of self management such as those described in this study, communication skills, and problem solving skills geared for the workplace.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Letter to Adult High School Directors

Requesting List of Student Names and Addresses

.

Dr. Earnest Walker, Superintendent

May 17, 1994

Dear Fellow Educator:

As you well know, the dropout rate of enrollees in Tennessee adult high schools averages 50% or higher. I am currently studying the extent of persistence of students who are enrolled in adult high schools across the state of Tennessee as a part of my doctoral dissertation at East Tennessee State University, and I need your help.

First, would you please send me, in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope, a list of names and addresses of those students who enrolled in your program during the 1992-93 school year who either have maintained enrollment or graduated from your program. Secondly, please include a **separate list** of those students who have enrolled in your program during the 1992-93 school year who have dropped out for one reason or another. Thirdly, would you please let me know if your school is in operation during the summer months.

I intend to send each student a survey concerning life style approaches, then tabulate data to see if self efficacy is an issue with dropouts and persistence. Perhaps the instrument can then be used with new enrollees to see if they are candidates for dropping out.

I appreciate your help in this study and will be glad to share the results with you if you desire.

Sincerely,

Sam Shepherd
Assistant Superintendent & Principal of Adult High School

SS/ag

Enclosure

APPENDIX B

Letter to Students

Requesting Participation in Survey
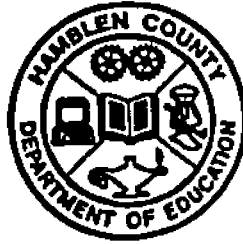
Dear Adult High School Student:

My name is Sam Shepherd, and I work in the Hamblen County School System in Morristown, TN. Some of my responsibilities include the Adult High School. I want to congratulate you for deciding to return to school and earn your diploma. Deciding to do this was an important step in your future, and you have been selected to take part in a very important study. The dropout rate in Adult High Schools is high, and I am doing a study to find out if staying in school is related to people's life management approach. This letter will go to graduates, those still in school, and those who have dropped out for one reason or another. I am doing this study as part of my school work at ETSU in Johnson City.

The survey that is enclosed with this letter won't take long for you to complete. Please read each question and answer it as best you can and as honestly as you can. You are not required to answer all questions if you don't want to. Seal the survey in the enclosed envelope and send it back to me. No one except me will see your answers, and there are no risks to you involved. You will help program planners design better adult high school programs by participating in this study.

Your participation is voluntary, and by completing and returning the survey you are saying you want to help and that it's OK for your answers to be used as a part of this study. Your answers will be part of a large group of data and not identified separately. The surveys are marked only to determine who has and has not replied. I am the only person who will know who returned the survey. Any information you provide will be strictly confidential, and the data will be maintained in a locked file in my home for a period of ten years before it is destroyed.

Thanks so much for your help, and if you have any questions about this survey you may contact me at (615) 586-7700.

Thanks again,

Sam Shepherd
Assistant Superintendent

SJS/aw

Enclosures
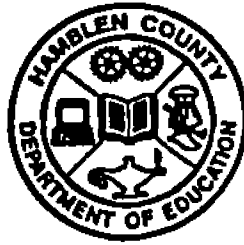
Earnest Walker, Superintendent

Dear Adult High School Student/Graduate:

A few days ago I mailed a survey form to you requesting your help in an important study. I have not heard from you yet, but your help is very important to complete this study. It concerns the life style approaches of adults who have attended Adult High Schools in Tennessee. Information from you will be compiled to help educators provide better programs for adults working on their high school diplomas.

If you have questions about the study or are not sure about whether to participate, let me assure you that your answers will be put into a large data base and not be identified separately. Nobody will know how you responded on the survey, and these answers are strictly confidential. If you have doubts, questions, or comments, please call me at (615) 586-7700 from 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., or (615) 586-4475 after 5:00 p.m.

The code on the survey is there to help identify those who have not sent the survey back.

Won't you please complete the enclosed survey and return it to me in the self addressed stamped envelope as soon as possible.

I appreciate your help.

Sincerely,

Sam J. Shepherd
Assistant Superintendent

SJS/aw

210 East Morris Boulevard • Morristown, Tennessee 37813 • (615) 586-7700

APPENDIX C

Survey Instrument/Scoring Guide

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

DIRECTIONS: *Please read the following questions carefully and check in the appropriate blank. Your answers will be kept confidential and used only for purposes of describing life style situations.*

Birth year: _____

Gender: ____ male
____ female

Race: ____ White
____ Black
____ Hispanic
____ other

Number of years needed to graduate: _____

Have you attended another adult high school or GED program before entering this one?
____ yes
____ no

If yes, please write the name of the school: _____

Marital status: ____ single
____ married
____ divorced
____ other (widowed, separated)

Occupational status before enrollment in adult high school:
____ unemployed (looking for work)
____ unemployed (not seeking work)
____ employed as a skilled worker
____ employed as an unskilled worker
____ homemaker
____ other, please specify: _____

Which category below corresponds most closely to your annual personal income?

___ under $ 5,000	___ $25,000 - $29,999
___ $ 5,000 - $ 9,000	___ $30,000 - $34,999
___ $10,000 - $14,999	___ $35,000 - $39,999
___ $15,000 - $19,999	___ $40,000 +
___ $20,000 - $24,999	

FOR GRADUATES ONLY: Have you enrolled in another educational program since you graduated?
____ yes
____ no

If you checked yes, please mark the appropriate category below:

____ two-year college	____ technical school
____ four-year college	____ other

LIFE STYLE APPROACHES (LSA) SCALE

DIRECTIONS: *For each of the following items, indicate how different or how similar that item is to your life style. Use the following scale:*

     (A)   Very different from me
     (B)   Somewhat different from me
     (C)   Uncertain
     (D)   Somewhat similar to me
     (E)   Very similar to me

Simply indicate your answer for each item by placing the appropriate letter in the blank before that item.

_____ 1. In most situations, I have a clear sense of what behaviors would be right or wrong for me.

_____ 2. When confronted with many different things to do, I have difficulty deciding what is most important to do.

_____ 3. After making a decision about what is most important to do at any given time, I easily get sidetracked from that activity.

_____ 4. Once I decide what is most important to do at any given time, I start on that task right away.

_____ 5. I write down the pros and cons of any behavior change I am considering.

_____ 6. I have difficulty judging how long it will take me to complete a task.

_____ 7. I seldom analyze what I am saying to myself regarding problem areas in life.

_____ 8. I have written down my life goals.

_____ 9. When I begin a personal change project, I generally keep my plans to myself.

_____ 10. I keep my work space well organized.

_____ 11. I have a clear sense of what I most want to experience in my life.

_____ 12. I seldom ask for feedback from others about behaviors I need to change and how best to change those behaviors.

LIFE STYLE APPROACHES (LSA) SCALE (continued)

___ 13. I complete tasks at the time I say I'm going to complete them.

___ 14. I seldom write down my yearly goals.

___ 15. I'm confused as to the kind of personal qualities I want to develop in my life.

___ 16. I have difficulty matching various tasks with my energy level.

___ 17. I subdivide big tasks into a series of smaller tasks.

___ 18. I have little idea as to what I most want to achieve in my life.

___ 19. I actively work to make the place where I spend a lot of time more attractive.

___ 20. I complete major tasks well in advance of deadlines.

___ 21. When I deviate from my selected goal, I have a hard time getting back on track.

___ 22. My living space is quite messy.

COMMENTS YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE ABOUT
YOUR ADULT HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE (OPTIONAL):

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

SCORING PROCEDURES FOR LSA

For the positive items (+), use the following scale in recording your response:
A = 0, B = 1, C = 2, D = 3, E = 4. For the negative items (-), use the following scale in recording your response: A = 4, B = 3, C = 2, D = 1, E = 0.

Factor 1 (Performance Focus and Efficiency):

- 2	_____	
- 3	_____	
- 6	_____	
-16	_____	
-21	_____	
Factor 1 Total		_____

Factor 2 (Goal directedness)

+ 1	_____	
+11	_____	
- 15	_____	
-18	_____	
Factor 2 Total		_____

Factor 3 (Timeliness of Task Accomplishment)

+ 4	_____	
+13	_____	
+17	_____	
+20	_____	
Factor 3 Total		_____

SCORING PROCEDURES FOR LSA (continued)

Factor 4 (Organization of Physical Space)

+10	_____
+19	_____
- 22	_____

Factor 4 Total _____

Factor 5 (Written Plans for Change)

+ 5	_____
+ 8	_____
- 14	_____

Factor 5 Total _____

Factor 6 (Verbal Support)

- 7	_____
- 9	_____
- 12	_____

Factor 6 Total _____

GRAND TOTAL of Factor Totals (your total score on LSA) _____

APPENDIX D

Life Style Approaches (LSA) Scale

Checklist for Pilot Study

CHECKLIST
FOR
LIFE STYLE APPROACHES (LSA) SCALE

DIRECTIONS: In the blank provided, please check any question students encountered difficulties interpreting or understanding on the survey instrument being piloted at your location. Place appropriate comments in the blanks provided below.

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

____ Birth Year   ____ Years to Graduate   ____ Occupational Status

____ Gender   ____ Other Programs Attended   ____ Annual Personal Income

____ Race   ____ Marital Status   ____ Other Programs After Graduation

LSA

____ 1	____ 9	____ 16
____ 2	____ 10	____ 17
____ 3	____ 11	____ 18
____ 4	____ 12	____ 19
____ 5	____ 13	____ 20
____ 6	____ 14	____ 21
____ 7	____ 15	____ 22
____ 8		

COMMENTS

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX E

Positive and Negative Statements

on the Life Style Approaches (LSA) Scale

LIFE STYLE APPROACHES (LSA) SCALE
POSITIVE/NEGATIVE STATEMENTS

POSITIVE STATEMENTS

1. In most situations, I have a clear sense of what behaviors would be right or wrong for me.
4. Once I decide what is most important to do at any given time, I start on that task right away.
5. I write down the pros and cons of any behavior change I am considering.
8. I have written down my life goals.
10. I keep my work space well organized.
11. I have a clear sense of what I most want to experience in my life.
13. I complete tasks at the time I say I'm going to complete them.
17. I subdivide big tasks into a series of smaller tasks.
19. I actively work to make the place where I spend a lot of time more attractive.
20. I complete major tasks well in advance of deadlines.

NEGATIVE STATEMENTS

2. When confronted with many different things to do, I have difficulty deciding what is most important to do.
3. After making a decision about what is most important to do at any given time, I easily get sidetracked from that activity.
6. I have difficulty judging how long it will take me to complete a task.
7. I seldom analyze what I am saying to myself regarding problem areas in life.
9. When I begin a personal change project, I generally keep my plans to myself.
12. I seldom ask for feedback from others about behaviors I need to change and how best to change those behaviors.
14. I seldom write down my yearly goals.
15. I'm confused as to the kind of personal qualities I want to develop in my life.
16. I have difficulty matching various tasks with my energy level.
18. I have little idea as to what I most want to achieve in my life.
21. When I deviate from my selected goal, I have a hard time getting back on track.
22. My living space is quite messy.

VITA

VITA

SAMUEL J. SHEPHERD

Personal Data: Date of Birth: March 30,1944
Place of Birth: Greeneville, Tennessee
Marital Status: Married

Education: Public Schools, Hawkins County, Tennessee
East Tennessee State University, Johnson City,
Tennessee
Tusculum College, Greeneville, Tennessee; Secondary
Education/Biology, B.S., 1968
East Tennessee State University, Johnson City,
Tennessee; Educational Administration and
Supervision, M.Ed., 1984
East Tennessee State University, Johnson City,
Tennessee; Administration, Ed.D., 1994

Professional
Experience: National Teacher Corps Cycle II Intern, Washington
County Board of Education, 1967-69
Teacher/Coach, Morristown Junior High School, Board
of Education, Morristown City Schools, 1969-75
Teacher/Coach, Meadowview Middle School, Board of
Education, Morristown City Schools, 1975-81
Assistant Principal, Meadowview Middle School, Board
of Education, Morristown City Schools, 1981-85
Assistant Principal, Morristown-Hamblen High School
East, Hamblen County Board of Education, 1985-87
Job Placement Supervisor, Hamblen County Board of
Education, 1987-89
Assistant Superintendent, Hamblen County Board of
Education, 1989 - present