Initial Forays into Psychological Science
John Brown University

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Contents

From the Faculty Sponsor ........................................................................................................ iii
Instructions for Contributors ................................................................................................ iv

Type-A Personality Correlated with Stress
Kyle V. Brytowski .................................................................................................................. 1

Relative Relationship Between Familial Background and Chosen College Major
Landon C. Dickeson ............................................................................................................... 5

The Influence of Television on Young Adult’s Self-Esteem
Carrie M. George .................................................................................................................. 10

The Relationship Between Procrastination and Perfectionism in Undergraduate College Students
Jill M. Lippincott .................................................................................................................. 15

Higher Self-Esteem of Upperclassmen Females in a Dating Relationship
Christie Newton .................................................................................................................. 19
From the Faculty Sponsor

The sixth volume of Initial Forays into Psychological Science (IFPS) is a provided new opportunities for student control of the journal. The student editorial duties are now split between the content editor, who makes the final decisions with regard to article selection, the production editor, who takes the articles from manuscript to publication and the graphics editor who decides on the look of the journal. I was very pleased with how the various skills of our editorial board were expressed in this volume. The journal retains its dual focus on providing advanced students experience in the peer review of empirical work and beginning students examples of excellent student work. It also provides a worthy outlet for publication of outstanding undergraduate empirical work.

Each year, I am impressed by the ability of the student editorial board and this year, with the new structure, I was very pleased by the work of all of our editors: Christi Newton in organizing the peer reviewing and making the final selections for publication, Jill Lippincott in taking the standard manuscript format and putting it into the format of a professional journal and Carrie George in defining a new direction for the look of the journal. I also appreciate the work done by the board of peer reviewers including the editorial board in addition to Dan Bolger, Kyle Brytowski and Jenny Hartwell. It was a great relief to transfer all of the work of producing the journal into their hands. I am already looking forward to next Fall when the process begins anew and we have another chance to improve the journal again.

Richard Froman, Faculty Sponsor of IFPS

The members of the Editorial Board for the sixth volume of IFPS (from left to right): Carrie George, Christi Newton, Jill Lippincott
Instructions for Contributors

Initial Forays into Psychological Science (IFPS) is a journal which solicits manuscripts from undergraduate students in psychology classes at John Brown University. Manuscripts may include research projects conducted for classes, theoretical and review papers written for classes, and empirical or theoretical research conducted as part of a course of independent study while an undergraduate student at John Brown University.

1. The author must have been a student in a psychology class at John Brown University at the time the paper was written. The paper must have been read and commented on by a John Brown University Psychology Department faculty member. Submission of research to IFPS is not limited to psychology majors but it is limited to students enrolled in psychology classes at John Brown University.

2. Manuscripts cannot be submitted for publication in IFPS while they are being considered for publication anywhere else.

3. Manuscripts must be formatted in accordance with the manuscript style of the latest edition of the American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual. Manuscripts must be submitted electronically as an attachment in either Microsoft Word format or Rich Text Format. Use a 12-point readable font (such as Times New Roman).

4. In the submission e-mail, provide your school e-mail address and a more permanent summer or post-graduation e-mail address, if one is available.

5. The review process will be completed during the course of the next Fall semester by the students in the Advanced Research Seminar. The members of the ARS course will act as reviewers for all of the submitted manuscripts and there will be a student editorial board appointed by faculty. The reviewers will work in groups so that students’ submissions will not be reviewed by anyone in their group. The review process is likely to require the author to make some revisions over the course of the Fall semester. Revisions need to be made and re-submitted in a timely way in order to ensure full consideration for publication.

6. The IFPS will be made freely available online for use by Research Methods students in the following semester to be used for assignments in the course. It will be published on the Psychology Department website at ftp://acadweb.jbu.edu/psychology/IFPS/IFPS.htm in a format that can be openly accessed by employers, graduate schools, family and friends, etc.

7. E-mail submissions to Dr. Rick Froman at: rfroman@jbu.edu. Include the following statement in your e-mail message: “I, [your name] give permission to have the attached manuscript considered for publication in IFPS. I give permission to the journal (IFPS) to publish my work and sell it to university students at cost. I understand that I will retain the copyright and the right to submit my manuscript to any other publication I desire.”
Type-A Personality Correlated With Trait Stress

Kyle V. Brytowski
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Previous research on Type-A personalities has shown that they are very often characterized by an increase in hostility and, more importantly for this study, stress. This study seeks to verify and support those claims, and to discover to what degree these characteristics are verifiable even in younger, undergraduate students. I surveyed a sample of undergraduate students from John Brown University, and they rated themselves on scales of stress and personality type. Their scores were recorded, and a two-tailed t-test was used to find significance between the two. I hypothesize that Type-A personalities will be more prone to trait stress than non-Type-A individuals, and the results seem to support this hypothesis. It would be befitting for future research to identify exactly what it is about Type-A personalities that make them so prone to stress, so that individuals are able to deal with stress more effectively and, thus, decrease its negative physiological results.

Keywords: Type-A Personality, Trait Stress

Recently, people have started wondering what affects an individual's emotions may have upon their health. Depression and related disorders obviously take a toll on health due to difficulty sleeping, a lack of appetite, and other related factors, but what solely physical effects will show themselves with the simple agitation of a person's psyche? One main area that has been researched is the effect of stress on an individual's health and well being. Stress is shown to have “accounted for 9.5% of the variation in illness,” according to Rawson, Harvee E., Bloomer, and Kimberly in a study that tested the effects of stress, anxiety, and depression on illness in undergraduates. In addition, Hudd et. al. found that undergraduate students who experience high levels of stress are more likely to practice a number of unhealthy behaviors.” A major culprit in heightened levels of stress is personality type. Researchers began to look which at personality types are more prone to higher levels of stress, and have especially focused on personality types such as Type-A, which is characterized by high hostility and impatience. Type-A personalities have been seen to have high job stress (Spector and O’Connell) and are considered to be angry and irritated in their work place (Riordan). Aside from simple occupational implications, personality type can go so far as to, potentially, have an impact on one's mortality (Nabi, et al.). My study looks at the link between this agitated personality type and level of trait stress (as opposed to situational stress) in undergraduate students. The hypothesis, as would be expected, is that, even in undergraduate studies, Type-A personalities will feel life stress more prevalently than non-Type-A personalities.
Method

Participants

One-hundred students attending John Brown University comprised the random sample from which the data was collected. The population from which the random sample came included all of the people attending the university as undergraduate students. Out of the 100 students invited through campus email to take the anonymous online survey, 34 actually completed the survey. Participants of both genders were asked to participate in the survey and no participant was under 18 years old.

Materials

The participants completed an online survey consisting of a stress level measure and personality inventory. The instrument was 40 questions in length (the first 30 measured trait stress level, and the last 10 measure Type-A personality), and it gave me enough information to appropriately describe my sample as undergraduate students.

Procedure

The randomly selected college students received an email explaining the survey and providing a link to it. The students read the informed consent, which explained that they would indicate their consent by completing the survey. They were also told that they could, at any point, terminate the survey with no repercussion to them whatsoever. The survey allows me to test my hypothesis by first and foremost testing one’s level of life stress. The first thirty questions are devoted to this. These questions are a brief and slightly varied form of “Hari’s Stress Inventory” (http://www.time-management-guide.com/assess-stress.html). Each question is multiple choice placed on a 5-point scale. A response in full agreement received a 5, while a response in complete disagreement received a 1, and all responses between place on an ordinal scale (5, 4, 3, 2, 1). Questions 3, 7, 8, 9, 14, 16, 17, 22, 26, 27, 29, and 30 are oppositely scored (full agreement incites a 1, while disagreement incites a 5). A score of greater than 75 is intended to indicate a higher than average level of stress. The next 10 questions compose the portion measuring personality type. These questions are “Yes or No” response questions. This scale was simply putting into question the main characteristics of a Type-A personality. A response of “Yes” in 6 or more of the questions is indicative of a Type-A personality.

Results

In this study, the two variables (stress and Type-A personality) were compared using a correlational t-test in order to examine the hypothesis that a Type-A undergraduate student experiences more life stress than an individual who is not Type-A. I found that 20 students were rated as “high stress”, 16 were classified as “Type-A,” and 14 students fell into both categories. I found that \( t(32)=2.69, p=.01 \). This shows that my results are significant, as \( p<.05 \), and that there is less than a 1% probability that the results I received were due to chance. There were 32 degrees of freedom, and the \( t \)-statistic was 2.69.

Discussion

A two-tailed t-test showed that, in fact, Type-A personality is positively correlated with life stress in undergraduate students. In other words, at John Brown University, students that were classified as having a Type-A personality also, generally, tested higher in stress level than students who are not Type-A personalities, which supports my initial hypothesis. This finding does seem to tie in quite nicely with the previous research that talked about the higher stress levels and higher hostility that were evident in business settings.
This study gives us insight into those we live and interact with. Instead of simply looking at our friends/significant others’ stress and dismissing it, we are able to look at their personality and see to what affect they are bothered by their situation. It allows us the ability to relate to those we care about more quickly and more easily.

I feel that an interesting area of research that could come of this is to look at Type-A personality and its correlation to health and well-being. Because we know that Type-A relates to stress, and stress relates to illness, it would be interesting to see how much (if at all) the Type-A personality type would relate to illness. It would be interesting not only to look at sickness and illness that will arise commonly (the cold, the flu, etc.), but to look at long-term health issues that arise (such as heart disease, clots, etc.).

Another area of future research that would be interesting to explore is if the stress that Type-A personalities are feeling is a stress that is derived internally or externally. Does the individual who feels a large amount of stress feel the stress because the world imposes the stress on him, or because he imposes it on him- or herself? This idea is somewhat vague, and would obviously need much more clear, standardized terms and tests before this could be measured.

There are a few alternative explanations for my results. The first and foremost is error within the scales that I applied. It is very possible that the scales do not accurately measure stress and Type-A personality (though I do believe that they are fairly accurate). If this is the case, the significant results that I found would be entirely null, as I would not even be sure if the scales were measuring anything in particular.

The next alternative explanation that I could think of would be the timing of the survey. It was taken at a time in most undergraduates’ life in which there is a considerable amount of stress with final projects and papers due. Therefore, this variable could have affected the participants’ responses in unforeseen ways. For example, the stress level could have been amplified in all students or, for that matter, their trait stress level could seem much less under the weight of such situational stress. For this reason, it is possible that the stress scale did not accommodate for the individuals’ varying stress levels.

The results also could have been affected by the narrow sample. The size of the sample was decent, as I had 34 people complete the survey. However, they were all undergraduates at John Brown University, which has a small sample population. It is predominantly Christian (which could affect the way one perceives of and reacts to stress), and simply by being in college, some may have a higher stress level than those who are not. Unfortunately, my sample was as large as I could easily make it.

All in all, this was an interesting study to do. As it turns out, personality does have a large effect on perception of, and reaction to, life (as seen with stress). It would be foolish, however, to say that our personality dictates our response to all situations. We are able to change and alter our perceptions (at least partially) by becoming conscious and aware of them. Because of this, individuals who are Type-A, are able to realize that they become stressed more easily than most, and actively participate in stress-management techniques, while people who are not Type-A personalities must realize that others may become stressed more easily than themselves.

References


Relative Relationship Between Familial Background and Chosen College Major

Landon C. Dickeson
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Previous research on factors affecting students’ college major choice suggested factors such as finances, personality type, and career potentiality as influential. This study sought to explore the minimally studied factor of home life. Therefore, that there is a direct relationship between a college students’ chosen college major and the type of home from which they come. To test this hypothesis, an online survey was created by the researcher and administered via email to a computer-generated random sample of JBU students. Analysis revealed a statistically significant relationship between level of parental neglect and college major chosen, but not between major chosen and parental openness or emotional distance. Future research should include a larger sample size and stronger categories.

Choosing a college major represents a major life decision that can either haunt an individual or bring them incredible self-satisfaction. As a result of the incredible weight of this decision, much research has been conducted in regards to why and how people chose their majors. One such study distinguished six major factors that have great bearing on a student’s choice. Those six factors, in order from most important to least are as follows: match with interest, major attributes of the university, job characteristics, financial considerations, psycho-social benefits and information search (Beggs, 2008). To define these factors a definition for each is given. First, match with interest refers to the efficacy the student perceives the major having for them (Beggs, 2008). Second, major attributes of the university refers quite simply to what services are offered by each university in question (Beggs, 2008). Third, job characteristics deals with the usefulness and marketability of the degree, as in, whether or not the student can perceive a way to make money with that degree (Beggs, 2008). Fourth, financial consideration involves both the student’s ability to pay the cost of education, as well as how much money he stands to make in the real world with the degree (Beggs, 2008). Fifth, psycho-social benefits refer to the student’s perception of how happy and successful he can perceive being within his chosen major (Beggs, 2008). Finally, information search involves who and what the student used to gain the information about the major, for example: family members, peers, high school teachers and mentors (Beggs, 2008). Of these six factors, it is the financial considerations and information search that most concern this study since they deal with home life.

Now, not all studies agree on the top factors, but among all the research there is a
common thread that results in overlapping ideas and perceptions of factors. Among these other research studies, there is Briggs’ An Exploratory Study of the Factors Influencing Undergraduate Student Choice: The Case of Higher Education in Scotland, which highlights ten major factors. Those 10 are: school life, educational aspirations, career aspirations, academic reputation, socio-economic status, ability, parental encouragement, finances, information received, and location (Briggs, 2006). As one may readily discern, there is much overlap in basic principle here. However, even though this study produced these identifying factors as major influencers, their overall focus was on how to predict a student’s choice in order that universities might better market themselves (Briggs, 2006). So, the conclusion was that information received was the major factor that required the most focus on the part of the universities (Briggs, 2006). This is a valuable piece of the decision making process, and it provides an understanding of the interplay of factors on the decision making process that informs the researcher of the importance of not isolating factors but viewing them as pieces of the whole.

One other aspect of this concept lies in the student’s own personality type. This factor was studied in 2006 by Pike, et al. which investigated the student’s intended major and college expectations through the application of Holland’s Theory, which basically states that an individual’s personality and vocational choice tend to align. In this study, Holland’s theory, which deals with persons, their environment, and the interactions between them, is applied to the choosing of a student’s college major (Pike, 2006). Through this, Pike uncovered “three components of Holland’s theory (that) give rise to three propositions about college students and their academic majors: (1) students actively seek out and select majors that are compatible with their personality types (self-selection); (2) Academic majors differentially reinforce and reward student abilities and interests (socialization); and (3) Students are more likely to flourish in environments that are congruent with their personality types (congruence) (Pike, 2006). Through this identified correlation of personality type and chosen major one may see that this is a critical piece of the decision making puzzle. While this certainly factors in, personality in itself is molded by one’s home life and the way one was raised; therefore, this assertion is in congruence with the relationship between home life and college major. Therefore, one may readily discern that there are a number of factors that contribute to the choosing of a college major. While all of these factors intertwine, some are of more value and preeminence than the others (Briggs, 2008). Thus, based upon this previous research, the hypothesis is that there is a direct relationship between college students’ chosen college major and the type of home from which they come.

Method

Participants

A computer generated, random sample of JBU Students was compiled with an original intention of 100 participants who received an email informing them of the research and providing them with a link to the survey. Of the original 100 that received the email, 25 responded. The sample was not gender or ethnic specific and consisted of participants ranging in age from 19-25.

Materials

The study utilized an online survey, which was compiled and administered by the researcher, and accounted for sufficient demographic data to properly describe the sample of participants. The survey consists of 43 questions designed to assess each participants’ home life in order that it may be categorized and compared with that of other participants. The categories for home life were
openness, emotional distance, and level of neglect. Also, the college majors were divided into four major categories: Natural Sciences, Liberal Arts, Art and Business.

**Procedure**

The randomly selected sample of college students at John Brown University received an email explaining the survey and providing a link to the online survey. The students were provided with the informed consent, which they read, and by completing the survey indicated their consent to the study. Upon receiving the results, the experimenter quantified the results by ranking each participant’s answers on a scale of 1-5 within each of the three categories, and these quantified results were then analyzed using a one-way ANOVA. The three categories were also correlated with one another in order to determine if there was a significant correlation between each of them as a whole. The results of these statistical analyses were then reported in the Results and Discussion sections.

**Results**

In order to determine if the hypothesis was valid, the results of the quantified answers from the survey were analyzed using a one-way ANOVA, and the categories of home life were correlated to determine if there existed any significance between them. The ANOVA determined that there was no significance between the participants’ chosen major and the categories of openness \(F(3,21)=2.9, p=0.057\) and emotional distance \(F(3,21)=0.95, p=0.43\). However, there was a significant result between chosen major and level of neglect, \(F(3,21)=3.22, p=0.04\). When the three categories were tested for any correlation between each other, it was determined that there was a significant correlation between emotional distance and level of neglect, \(r(23)=0.54, p=0.005, r^2=0.30\).

![Figure 1: The level of parental neglect analyzed by major.](image1)

![Figure 2: The correlation between the categories of emotional distance and level of neglect.](image2)
Discussion

The testing of the research hypothesis using an analysis of variance of the quantified results of the survey and a correlation test for the three categories of home life determined that there is no statistical significance between chosen major and the categories of openness and emotional distance. However, the ANOVA did determine a significant result between major and level of neglect, which suggests that parents who were/are highly involved in their children’s lives influence the type of major (and therefore type of career) their children choose for themselves. Likewise, parents who were/are neglectful of their children inadvertently direct their children towards a different type of major (and later career type). Specifically, those students’ who scored highest on level of neglect tended to seek out liberal arts majors, while students’ whose parents were highly involved in their lives tended to chose Natural Science majors. The correlation test also revealed a significant correlation between emotional distance and level of neglect, but not between any other combinations of categories. This result simply revealed that the categories of emotional distance and level of neglect are correlated and affect one another.

This research topic was largely unexplored in previous research due to the high variability in alternative processes affecting the choice of college major. According to the research conducted by Beggs (2008) there are six factors affecting the choice behind a college major and Beggs’ highlights matching major with personal interest as the most important factor, and lists factors of home life as least important. This suggests that a student’s personality and personal drive are greater influencers on choosing a major than their type of home life, therefore, the results of this study may be due to extraneous variables such as this and the significant result may be due entirely to these other, preexisting factors. However, it is also possible that the significance of home life on the decision making process has been largely overlooked by previous research studies and that home life is an underlying factor that influences personality type which influences college major choice. These points also relate directly to the results of the research of Briggs (2006) and Pike (2006) as well. Briggs (2006) highlights the effects of information received on the decision making process. Briggs (2006) asserts that colleges should market their services as largely and as much as possible, because students decide which college to attend and what degree to major in based on the information they take in regarding the various colleges available to them. Furthermore, this research displays the significance of another factor on college major choice that relates to the financial aspect of home life and the parents’ views on money in regards to their children’s education, thereby adding another piece to the puzzle. Finally, Pike’s (2006) research demonstrates perhaps the most important factor on college major choice, which is influenced by home life. He asserts that personality type, as evaluated through Holland’s theory, is the most important factor and greatest predictor of major choice in college students, as well as in vocational choice. This being such a strong influence is quite possibly the greatest support to suggest that this study’s results were due to chance alone and that the choice of college major is due more to personality type than home life, which also suggests that home life is indeed an underlying factor that only indirectly affects major choice.

Therefore, since a statistically significant result between college major choice and level of neglect was found, this element of home life may be considered an influencing factor that exists only as an underlying factor in the decision making process due to its direct affect on personality type which is a more direct determinate of college major choice.
As such, the results of this study are helpful in informing parents of the importance of their positive interactions with their children and how these interactions influence their children's future choices. This study also demonstrates the relevance of the multi-faceted aspect of human personality and the extreme variability of factors, which influence the choices people make, especially those that are life altering and result in life-long consequences.

Moreover, future research on these concepts should isolate particular aspects of student's home life and test a larger sample size on these specific variables. Such a study would give more insight into which aspects of home life are the most crucial in cultivating young people's personalities, as well as how all of these interactions affect their decision making processes, such as choosing a college major. A possible confounding variable in this research topic was the fact that it tested students from a limited portion of the JBU population and did not explore more majors, other campuses, or even a great diversity among the students at JBU. Future expanding studies should strive to eliminate these confounders.

In the end, though the results of this study were largely inconclusive and did not entirely align with past research, it is important to note that the results do open the door to other important research topics that have the potential to develop greater insight into human development and how development affects decision-making. Such a concept is of crucial importance to all major colleges and universities that seek to understand, influence, and improve their students’ quality of life in all areas of their students’ lives. Therefore, JBU and other universities would do well to take advantage of the results of studies such as this that reveal the factors that put their students where they are in the first place. For none can understand where they are going without first knowing, understanding, and coming to terms with where they have been.

References


The Influence of Television on Young Adult’s Self-Esteem

Carrie M. George
John Brown University

This study investigates the relationship between exposure to television and self-esteem. Previous studies have shown that an adolescent’s exposure to mass media such as magazines and television can dramatically lower one’s self-esteem (Bessenoff, 2006). This study will move past adolescent behavior to a young adult population. Forty participants between the ages of 18 and 23 were randomly selected to complete a survey that included a self-esteem index. The hypothesis is that individuals who watch more television will score lower on the self-esteem assessment. However, out of the 40 survey recipients, 38 participants completed it. In both the One-Way ANOVA as well as the t-test, the correlation between watching television and a person’s self-esteem was not significant.

Keywords: self-esteem, self-perception, media, mass media, body image, adolescence, television

In modern society, the population is being bombarded with information through resources such as mass media (magazines and television). Furthermore, there is a societal decrease in self-esteem with signs such as depression and eating disorders including obesity. But does the influence of mass media, specifically television, directly affect a person’s self-esteem?

Previous research with adolescent girls shows that being exposed to thin models in magazines can decrease a girl’s self-esteem remarkably (Clay, 2005). Although magazines can have a negative effect on the view of a person’s self-image, Tiggemann’s (2003) study tested whether magazines or television would have the greatest impact on a person’s self-esteem. Even though both forms of media were associated with clear signs of a declining self-image, there is a strong correlation between the viewing of television and self-esteem related issues such as eating disorders. Although a decrease in self-esteem starts in adolescence, studies show that self-esteem continues to decrease throughout adolescence. (Clay, 2005). In this way, this research will extend its study to young adults from ages 18 to 23. Therefore, the hypothesis of this study is that individuals ages 18-23 who are exposed to more television will score lower on a self-esteem assessment than those who watch little or no television.

Method

Participants
Forty undergraduate students at John Brown University, a small liberal arts college in Siloam Springs, Arkansas were randomly...
selected both within dorms as well as other public areas on campus. I handed out the survey to a random selection of people in an all girls dorm as well as to people I passed on the sidewalk around campus. The participants were handed an envelope containing directions and a survey. Thirty-eight participants participated in the project.

Materials

A self-developed survey combined with a self-esteem questionnaire (see Appendix) was handed to each participant in an envelope. Forty students enrolled at John Brown University either in dorms or other public areas on campus were handed the directions as well as the survey.

The survey is divided into two parts. The first part asks two multiple choice questions. The first question asks how many times a week the participant views television. The second asks approximately how many hours in a day the participant views television (refer to the appendix to see the answer choices).

The second part of the survey is composed of the Index of Self-Esteem (ISE). This questionnaire, made by the Dorsey Press, contains 25 statements. The participant is asked to rank each statement on a scale of one to five: one being rarely or none of the time, five being most or all of the time. The ISE was then graded by reverse-scoring numbers 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 14, 15, 18, 21, 22, 23, and 25. These scores were then totaled together along with the other numbers and 25 was subtracted from the total. This number should be in the range of 1 to 100. The lower a person scored on the index, the higher his/her self-esteem is rated. If a participant scores above a 30, that person has an exceedingly low self-esteem. If the participant scores below a 30, that person has a normal to a high self-esteem rating.

Procedure

The randomly selected individuals were handed the survey. By filling out the survey, the participants were acknowledging the confidentiality of the survey. An informed consent document was attached to the front of the survey. By putting the survey back into the envelope, the survey remained confidential. If the participants wished to know the results of the survey, they could write their box number on the outside of the envelope.

Results

Data from the 38 participants were analyzed using one simple ANOVA and one independent sample t-test. Within the ANOVA analysis, the data were split into three groups depending on how often each participant watches television throughout the week. The results were not significant, $F=(2, 34)+.515, p=ns$. The groups that were analyzed in the t-test were divided based upon how many hours each participant viewed television per day. These data were also insignificant, $t(34)+.313, p=ns$. This data proving that there is no significant correlation between watching television and rating lower on a self-esteem analysis.

Discussion

The hypothesis that individuals who watch more television will score lower on the self-esteem assessment than those who watch less television was not supported by the research of this study. Participants who watched little or no television at all showed both high and low self-esteem scores on the ISE. Likewise, individuals who watched four hours or more television daily showed no significant difference in their self-esteem score.

This study shows contrary results to previous research that conducted and
experiment by exposing female adolescents to different forms of media followed by a self-esteem test (Tiggemann 2003). This study showed that self-esteem was significantly impacted by different forms of media especially television. However, according to the ISE scaling system, if an individual scores a 30 or above on the index, that person is said to have severe self-esteem issues. In this study, 17 of the 38 participants scored higher than a 30: an alarming number of individuals with self-esteem issues for a small sample. This data may support the research of Clay (2005) that finds self-esteem tends to decrease during adolescence and continue to fall when entering adulthood. However, in order for this assumption to be completely accurate, these participants would have had to have been given the ISE during different stages of adolescents.

Probably the most important factor concerning the insignificance of this study is the fact that all of the participants were college students. This fact is significant for many reasons. First, studying takes up most of the hours of a college student. The mere fact that an individual is able to watch television during the week may be an indicator to the amount of free time that person has throughout the week. The more free time that an individual has, the more time he/she is able to spend time with peers and receive outside affirmation on a daily or weekly basis. This leads to the second point. Many students tend not to watch television in seclusion, but instead with other people. While, on the other hand, students tend to study alone. Therefore, watching television with friends may increase the self-esteem of a person that spends most of the time studying.

Therefore, in a replication of this study, either the sample should reach out to the young adult population outside of the college spectrum, or the factors of studying and seclusion should be included in the survey. There should be questions concerning if the individual watched television in seclusion or with people, how many hours a day he/she spends studying, and does the participant usually study alone or in a group setting. The a larger sample should complete the survey in order to cover a broader range of people.

All in all, research supports the notion that self-esteem should be affected negatively when exposed to forms of media such as television. However, this study showed no significant correlation between television and self-esteem. The main factor pertaining to the insignificance of the results is that the sample was completely made up of young adults who attend college. The fact that 17 out of the 38 people who participated in the study show signs of severe self-esteem problems indicates the importance and necessity to study the young adult population with regard to self-esteem related issues.

References


Appendix

Survey

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

You are being given the opportunity to volunteer to participate in a project conducted through John Brown University.

This project was designed specifically for the Research Methods class. The subject I will be researching is extremely influential in today’s society. You will be handed an envelope with a survey enclosed. If you are under the age of 18 you should NOT participate in this survey! Please do not put your name on the survey or the envelope. However, if you wish to know the results of the project you may put your JBU box# on the outside of the envelope. There are no known risks involved in completing this survey, and will only take about ten minutes of your time. This survey is COMPLETELY confidential. Your name will not appear any documents handed to me. The surveys will not be kept in any particular order, and I will not look at the answers until all of my data has been collected. Refusal to participate in this study will have NO EFFECT ON ANY FUTURE SERVICES you may be entitled to from the University. You are FREE TO WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY AT ANY TIME WITHOUT PENALTY. If you decide to participate in the project, please complete the survey. If you have any questions at any time during the study, you may contact Carrie George at (970) 389-2810, Dr. Rick Froman at (479) 524-7295, or the Chair of John Brown University’s Institutional Review Board at (479) 524-7164.

I have been given information about this research and about any potential risks or benefits that may accompany my participation. I also have been given, and understand, my rights as a participant in this research. By completing this survey I give my consent to participate in this project.

This is not a test, so there are no right or wrong answers. Please answer each item as carefully and accurately as you can.

Age: ______
Sex: ______
Approximately how many days per week do you watch television?
   ____A. I do not watch television at all
   ____B. 1 to 3 times a week
   ____C. 4 to 6 times a week
   ____D. I watch television every day
Approximately how many hours do you watch television a day?
   ____A. Less than 1 Hour a day
   ____B. 1 to 3 Hours a day
   ____C. 4 Hours or more a day
Influence of Television

Please answer each question by placing a number by each item.
1= Rarely or none of the time
2 = A little of the time
3 = Some of the time
4 = A good part of the time
5 = Most or all of the time

____1. I feel that people would not like me if they really knew me well.
____2. I feel that others get along much better than I do.
____3. I feel that I am a beautiful person.
____4. When I am with other people I feel they are glad I am with them.
____5. I feel that people really like to talk with me.
____6. I feel that I am a very competent person.
____7. I think I make a good impression on others.
____8. I feel that I need more self-confidence.
____9. When I am with strangers I am very nervous.
____10. I think that I am a dull person.
____11. I feel ugly.
____12. I feel that others have more fun than I do.
____13. I feel that I bore people.
____15. I think I have a good sense of humor.
____16. I feel very self-conscious when I am with strangers.
____17. I feel that if I could be more like other people I would “have it made.”
____18. I feel that people have a good time when they are with me.
____19. I feel like a wallflower when I go out.
____20. I feel I get pushed around more than others.
____21. I think I am a rather nice person.
____22. I feel that people really like me very much.
____23. I feel that I am a likable person.
____24. I am afraid I will appear foolish to others.
____25. My friends think very highly of me.

Thank you so much for participating in this survey!
The Relationship Between Procrastination and Perfectionism in Undergraduate College Students

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Previous research on procrastination suggested a significant positive relationship between procrastination and perfectionism. This study sought to determine an association between procrastination and perfectionism among college students at John Brown University. The data for this study was collected from a random sample made up of 100 John Brown University students. Participants completed a 43-item survey consisting of the Procrastination Scale (Lay, 1986) and the APS-R Short Form (Slaney, Mobley, Trippi, Ashby, & Johnson, 1996). They received the survey by email. Twenty-five participants responded to the survey. The results indicated a non-significant positive correlation, $r(23) = .33$, $p = .1$. Future research may benefit from looking at a larger sample size and by using multidimensional measures of perfectionism.

Keywords: procrastination, perfectionism, college students, academic

College academics can be the source of a great deal of pressure for many students. There are different ways in which students can decide to handle this pressure. Some students immediately get to work on their assigned tasks and complete them early. Others prefer to work on their assignments a little each day until complete. Still, some students choose to deal with the stress of academia by procrastinating, or putting their work off as long as possible and then rushing to get finished on time. Many students who procrastinate barely make their deadlines or even turn their assignments in late. Tice and Baumeister (1997) conducted a study on the costs and benefits of procrastination and found that stress and illness are higher for procrastinators than for non-procrastinators. Based on their results, they suggest that procrastination is a self-defeating behavior.

One widespread belief is that procrastination is related to exceptionally high standards (Flett, Blankstein, Hewitt, & Koledin, 1992, p. 85), or perfectionism. Ferguson and Rodway (1994) explain that perfectionism can have detrimental effects on individual, intrapersonal, and interpersonal resources. Previous research suggests a link between procrastination and perfectionism. For instance, Brownlow and Reasinger (2000) conducted a study that examined the impact of motivation toward academic work and personality variables on academic procrastination. Their sample was comprised of 96 undergraduate students who completed six different scales of measurement, two of which measured procrastination and perfectionism. They found that perfectionism, among other factors, predicted procrastination in college students (pp. 19-23).

Other studies have also found that...
procrastination and perfectionism are linked but that the association is very complex. For example, Flett et al. (1992) conducted a study in which they sought to find an association between socially prescribed perfectionism and academic procrastination, but not self-oriented perfectionism. They also sought to find potential factors, such as fear of failure, which may contribute to the link between procrastination and perfectionism. They administered two different perfectionism scales and two different procrastination scales to 131 undergraduate students. Their main finding was a significant relationship between socially prescribed perfectionism and procrastination. Self-oriented perfectionism, however, was not significantly associated with procrastination. They also found that an essential factor with regard to perfectionism is the fear of failure. Though a cause and effect relationship was not found in this study, the perceived existence of high social standards may contribute to procrastination (pp. 88-92).

Onwuegbuzie (2000) conducted a study regarding academic procrastination and perfectionism in graduate students, who may have an even greater tendency than undergraduates to procrastinate on academic tasks. Participants in this study included 135 graduate students at a small southeastern university. Each participant was asked to complete an assessment scale for procrastination that measured the amount of procrastination on certain types of tasks as well as the reasons for procrastination. In addition, each participant completed a perfectionism scale that measured three different dimensions of perfectionism: self-oriented, other-oriented, and socially prescribed. The results of this study found a positive correlation between academic procrastination and socially prescribed perfectionism, with fear of failure being the only noteworthy response with regard to reasons for procrastination. Onwuegbuzie proposed that procrastinators are likely overly concerned with the standards the other people hold for them. This study also suggests that some procrastinators engage in perfectionism either to generate a faultless product or to impress others by one’s efforts (pp. 103-108).

The previous studies (Brownlow & Reasinger, 2000; Flett et al., 1992; Onwuegbuzie, 2000) suggest a relationship between academic procrastination and perfectionism among college students. The purpose of the present study was to find out if this holds true for undergraduates at John Brown University. Consistent with previous research, I expected to find an association between procrastination and perfectionism in undergraduate college students. The hypothesis is that procrastination is positively correlated with perfectionism.

Method

Participants
The data for this study was collected from a random sample made up of 100 John Brown University students who were all over the age of 18. John Brown University is a small, private, predominantly Christian university. The population, college students, is represented by this random sample. Twenty-six of the 100 students who received the email actually completed the online survey.

Materials
The participants completed an online survey consisting of the Procrastination Scale (Lay, 1986) and the Almost Perfect Scale-Revised (APS-R) Short Form (Slaney, Mobley, Trippi, Ashby, & Johnson, 1996). The Procrastination Scale (for students) contained 20 statements such as “I generally delay before starting on work I have to do” and responses could be indicated on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (extremely uncharacteristic) to 5 (strongly characteristic). This scale has been found to be valid and reliable in a variety of
Procrastination and Perfectionism

contexts (Lay, 1987, 1988; Kusyszyn, 1990 as cited in Flett et al., 1992). The APS-R Short Form contained 23 statements such as “I expect the best from myself” and responses could be indicated on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The APS-R Short Form has been found to have acceptable levels of internal consistency (Slaney, Rice, Mobley, Trippi, & Ashby, 2001). The online survey included a total of 43 items.

Procedure

The 100 randomly selected college students received an email that included the informed consent information, explanation of the survey, and a link to the survey. The students read the informed consent information, which explained that by completing the survey, they were giving their consent to participate in the study. The data was returned on a spreadsheet.

Results

The hypothesis of the present study was tested using a Pearson $r$ Correlation which determined the correlation between the scores on the Procrastination Scale and the APS-R Short Form. A total of 26 participants responded to the survey. The data analysis revealed that the participants’ levels of procrastination and the levels of perfectionism were not significantly correlated, $r(24) = .33, p = .09$.

Discussion

A significant correlation between procrastination and perfectionism was not found in the present study. The result of this study did not support the hypothesis and is not congruent with previous research in this area. Brownlow and Reasinger (2000), Flett et al. (1992), and Onwuegbuzie (2000) all found a significant positive association between some dimension of perfectionism and procrastination. Surprisingly, the results of the present study were not significant and did not correspond to previous findings.

The present study differed from previous research in that it only looked at procrastination and general perfectionism, whereas other studies considered different dimensions of perfectionism. For instance, Flett et al. (1992) found a significant relationship between procrastination and socially prescribed perfectionism, but they did not find the same relationship with self-oriented perfectionism. This difference in measurement may be one reason why the results of the current study were not significant. In addition, it should be noted that the present study had a sample size of 26 participants, which reduced the likelihood of a significant result.

Because procrastination is a potentially detrimental practice and is prominent among college students, it is important for faculty and those involved with academic assistance to

![Figure 1. Non-significant weak positive correlation between levels of procrastination and levels of perfectionism.](image)
understand the coinciding factors so that they can better know how to assist those struggling with procrastination. Whether perfectionism actually causes procrastination is not known, but it may help perfectionists to be aware of their possible tendencies to procrastinate so that they can take proactive measures to prevent the behavior.

Future research may benefit from a larger sample size and a multidimensional measure of perfectionism. It may be that the source of motivation toward perfectionism could have effects on one’s tendency to procrastinate. Also, it may be interesting to incorporate a measurement of fear of failure in a future study of this kind, since fear of failure seems to be linked to both procrastination and perfectionism (Flett et al., 1992; Onwuegbuzie, 2000).

Though these results do not support the hypothesis that procrastination is significantly and positively correlated with perfectionism, both of these components are of importance to college students. Both procrastination and perfectionism have potentially detrimental effects for the overall academic performance and health of college students and should therefore be studied further.

References


Define self-esteem as “a confidence and satisfaction in oneself.” This definition of the concept of self-esteem portrays the important role that self-esteem plays in everyday life. An adage heard at many small Christian universities that affects students’ self-esteem is “a ring by spring or your money back.” This adage has greatly affected the environment of Christian universities, as being in a relationship is a main priority for students.

There are very few studies done on the specific correlation between women’s self-esteem and relationship status, but many studies have been done on gender differences in the pressure to marry and college students’ reasons for wanting to marry. One such study was conducted by Judith E. Blackwell, Carol A. Lawton, and Lesa R. Vartanian (2005) on a college campus. This study sought to determine the gender differences between the drive to marry in young unmarried individuals. They found that women have a higher drive to marry, but that there is no difference in the self-conscious pressure to marry between men and women (330). However, it was found that women with high drive to marry scores were more concerned with other’s opinion of them and that the drive to marry is a significant predictor of a woman’s drive to marry (332). This study reveals that there is in fact pressure on college women to marry and that often times the pressure is created from self-conscious attitudes about what is expected from them.

Donna McDonald and John P. McKinney (1994) considered the relationship between self-esteem and the practice of going steady in high school students. This study
evaluated the self-esteem levels of sophomores in high school and predicted that individuals who had gone steady or were currently going steady in a heterosexual relationship would have lower self-esteem than those who had never gone steady and that these differences in self-esteem would be more pronounced in girls than in boys (558). The results found that students who were going steady had lower self-esteem than those who were not in a steady relationship, but those who had gone steady in the past, but were no longer dating anyone, had higher self-esteem than those individuals who had never gone steady at all (561). This study found a link between going steady in high school sophomore and in lower self-esteem (562).

Richard H. Kelmer (1971) also did a study on self-esteem, college-dating experience, and how those elements factor into mate selection and marital happiness. The relevant portion of this study lies within the results that college women with extreme high self-esteem had a higher dating frequency, but were less likely to be steadily dating the same individual. The women with extreme high self-esteem also were more likely to marry earlier than women with average self-esteem (185).

Self-esteem in relation to dating has been a topic of study for many years and has returned many different results. The purpose of the present study is to determine how the relationship status, whether single or in a relationship, affects the self-esteem of females at a small private Christian university, specifically John Brown University. The self-esteem of junior and senior females, who are single, will be significantly lower than juniors and seniors who are in a relationship at John Brown University.

Method

Participants
One hundred females from the student population of John Brown University comprised the participant group for the survey. Stratified random sampling determined the participants, as the sample was taken from the subpopulation of upperclassmen female undergraduate students. Out of the 100 students asked to take the survey, 28 completed the survey. The mode of the participants’ classification was that of a junior and of the relationship status was single. The data analysis includes the survey results from this group.

Materials

The participants completed an online survey that questioned their level of self-esteem and the demographical characteristics of classification and relationship status. The survey consisted of 18 self-esteem evaluating questions and sufficient demographic questions to determine correlation between relationship status and self-esteem in each class classification.

Procedure

The random population of females received the survey via e-mail. The survey contained the informed consent document and explained the instructions and sufficient reasoning for completing the survey. The results were returned via an online spreadsheet.

Results

In order to evaluate the relationship between self-esteem and relationship status in upperclassmen females at John Brown University, a two-sample t-test was used. The average classification of participants was 3.28, meaning that majority of the participants were juniors, because juniors were assigned a value of 3 and seniors were assigned a value of 4. The mode relationship status of the participants was that of single, as 10 participants were
self-reported as being in a relationship and 18 self-reported as being single. In comparing the mean of self-esteem of females in a relationship and the mean of self-esteem of females who are single, the t-test returned the results of \( t(26) = 2.055, p > .05 \). The presence of a p-value that is higher than .05 indicates that the results of this statistical analysis are not significant.

A Pearson \( r \) Correlation determined the relationship between self-esteem and relationship status. The mean of the self-esteem measurements from the responses of the 28 participants were compared with relationship status. The data analysis returned an insignificant, slight positive correlation between relationship status and self-esteem levels, \( r(28) = .09 \). (Figure 1) The \( r^2 = .008 \) indicates that less than 1% of the variance in self-esteem levels results from relationship status.

The descriptive statistical analysis returned the self-esteem averages for females who are single and females who are in a relationship. The average for single females was a self-esteem level of 66.2, while the self-esteem level for females in a relationship was 67.9. (Figure 2) These results show a simple comparison of the similarity between the self-esteem levels of females in relationship and single females.

**Discussion**

The results of the study of the self-esteem of female upperclassmen that are in a relationship versus those who are single did not return a significant result. The results of the study showed that the self-esteem of females both in a relationship and single have the same levels of self-esteem. The results of
the correlation study also showed that there is no association between a female’s relationship status and level of self-esteem. The insignificant results that the study returned provide proof towards the fact that the mantra, “ring by spring or your money back”, does not affect female upperclassmen’s self-esteem when it remains unfulfilled.

The results of the study present the idea that the self-esteem levels of individual females who are in a relationship are not any higher than the self-esteem levels of females who are single at John Brown University. These results contradict the perceived pressure put upon students to find their life mate while attending the university. This leads to the practical application of the fact that dating has no effect on self-esteem and because of that females should not allow their relationship status to affect them and their outlook on life. The fact that there was no statistical significance between the self-esteem of female upperclassmen in a relationship and the self-esteem of single female upperclassmen presents that dating does not determine a female’s level of self-esteem at a small private Christian university.

In reference to the previous research found about pressure to date and the self-esteem of individuals in relation to dating, this study shows that there is no difference between the self-esteem levels of women who are dating and those who are single, which contrast with the study done by McDonald and McKinney (1994). This study also does not confirm that women with higher self-esteem are more likely to be dating someone, because the self-esteem levels of women that were single or in a relationship were the same. The study done by Kelmer (1971) is neither validated nor denied by the completion of this study.

While this research may have returned results that are not statistically significant, there are many explanations for why this may have occurred. One possible reason for the results is the small sample size that was present. A large sample size might have returned a more significant result. Additional the small sample size was composed of mostly single juniors. This large proportion of the sample size could have skewed the results because juniors would not feel the same amount of pressure to marry as seniors would. The amount of single participants could have counteracted the overabundance of juniors because of the theory that singles would have lower self-esteem, but juniors would have higher self-esteem then seniors because of the extra year that they have until graduation. In order to improve the quality and statistical results of this study, it might be prudent to have a larger sample size and to create a sample size that contains an even amount of juniors and seniors.

The basis of this study leads to many different areas that may be important to research. One such direction to research is to survey males at private Christian universities to see if there is an impact on self-esteem levels according to their relationship status. Another area of research might be to determine the amount of pressure that students at a small private Christian university feel to be in a dating relationship with someone and to be married when they graduate from college. The self-esteem of upperclassmen at a secular college or university would also provide a productive route of study, as it would show the similarities or dissimilarities between the relationship of self-esteem and dating at both secular and Christian universities. These three alternate routes of study would shed a more light on whether or not there is pressure to date at a small private Christian university and the effect that dating has on an individual’s self-esteem. It would be beneficial to see if statistics would support the anecdotal evidence that these two issues present throughout one’s time at a small private Christian university. The study to determine the self-esteem levels of male upper-class students is the same as the study conducted in the research experiment.
and would merely require the surveying of male participants instead of female participants. These continuing research directions would shed more light on whether or not there is in fact any pressure placed on the students at small private Christian universities to get married, as is commonly believed.

Throughout the culture of Christian universities, there is the commonly held belief that one should find their life partner during college. While universities do not officially support these beliefs the pressure may still be present. This pressure to marry and be in a dating relationship has the potential to affect students’ levels of self-esteem. The survey of the study of the effect of pressure to date on females returned the statistics that the self-esteem levels of females in a relationship and single female is relatively the same. While the self-esteem levels of females appear to be unaffected by pressures to date, there is always the possibility that the sample size was too small to return accurate results.

References

*Sex Roles, 53*, 5/6, 327 – 337.

