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Career Decision-Making and Self-Esteem in College Honors Students

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CAREER DECISION-MAKING AND SELF-ESTEEM
IN COLLEGE HONORS STUDENTS

BY
DENISE ANNE GODIN

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, COUNSELING AND FAMILY STUDIES

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Abstract

The career decision-making processes and global self-esteem of the University of Rhode Island Fall, 1992 honors students were analyzed. Eighty seven honors curriculum participants were administered the Career Decision Scale, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and a demographic information sheet. The results of the study did not reveal a significant relationship between the variables of global self-esteem and career decision-making. However, the findings suggest that academically talented honors students in this sample did, to an extent, exhibit unique career development needs worthy of specialized services. The general findings of this study suggest the following issues played a role in the career decision-making processes of the subjects in this sample: the multipotential nature of the subjects, high external expectation, diminished motivation with respect to career decision-making, and lack of career information. It is recommended that the career development needs of academically talented college honors students be addressed through continued research and through specialized programming and/or services.

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Preface

This manuscript adheres to the guidelines of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA, 1983) in all respects except two. The margins and pagination of this manuscript were prepared in accordance with the University of Rhode Island's Thesis and Dissertation Format Guidelines.

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Career Decision-making and Self-Esteem in College
Honors Students

Career development research specific to the college population is important to higher education professionals for two reasons. Human development theorists such as Erik Erikson and Arthur Chickering hold that traditionally aged college students undergo a process of identity formation or identity integration. Erikson (1968) described identity as "a commitment to a personal integration of values, goals, and abilities" (cited in Newman & Newman, 1990, p. 416). Chickering (1969) emphasizes the integration of purpose in the identity formation processes of college students. "The development of purpose involves assessment and clarification of interests, educational and career options, and life style preference" (cited in Widick, Parker, & Knefelkamp, 1978, p. 25). The identity formation process in college students is characterized by personal exploration followed by choice. It is widely accepted that career decision-making is an integral aspect of this stage of human development. According to Newman and Newman (1990) "one of the

primary means by which identity is expressed in our society is commitment to an occupation" (p. 449).

Research that sheds light on factors which may lead to ineffective career decision-making is of significance to educators charged with facilitating the development of college students.

Career development research is beneficial also to educators concerned with college student retention. The literature reveals a link between career indecision and college attrition. Tinto (1987) states that when "career and identities are crystallized, that is, when individuals are more certain as to their futures, they are more likely to finish college. When plans remain unformulated over extended periods of time, that is, when uncertainty persists for several years, they (students) are more likely to depart without completing their degree programs" (p. 44).

Beal and Noel (1980) found "that the student with limited educational plans and without any clear goals in pursuing a postsecondary education is more apt to dropout" (cited in Sprandel, 1985, p. 303). Similarly, Rose and Elton (1971) state that "indecision (with respect to career) is presumed by these investigators to be a sign of lack of motivation leading to early

departure from college" (p. 99). Given the increased competitiveness between colleges and universities with respect to student enrollment, the issue of retention and its related factors, career indecision in this case, have emerged as crucial topics of inquiry.

This investigation was specific to academically talented college students, defined by their enrollment in an honors curriculum. Career development research specific to this population is particularly important for at least three reasons. First, the issue of retention amongst this college population is of considerable importance to educators. Honors students, equipped with high intellectual capability and a wide breadth of interests, represent the best candidates for achievement in the academic setting and beyond. It is very often assumed that honors students represent the most able and most motivated students at colleges and universities (Austin, 1986). Brown (1991) states that "since its inception, honors education has stood for serving the needs of the best and the brightest" (p.29). Expectation for college persistence with this particular population is very high. Therefore, factors which inhibit persistence, such as career indecision, are worthy of further investigation.

Secondly, the literature specific to academically talented students reveals that such students often have unique needs with respect to career development.

According to Schroer and Dorn (1986) "academically talented students must often consider a wide range of interests, and abilities, cope with high expectations from others, and make decisions regarding investments of time and money in their future careers" (p. 567). Additionally, the literature reveals a significant emphasis on the "multipotentiality" of academically talented students. The multipotentiality of an individual refers to the fact that they "possess many interests and competencies" (Sanborn, 1979, p. 285). It is the problematic nature of multipotentiality that is of interest to this investigation. Kerr (1986) states that "multipotential students are able to select and develop skills to a high level; as result they often encounter great difficulty in career development" (p. 602).

Another career development issue that is particularly emphasized among academically talented students is that of external expectation. The high value placed upon academic talent sets up a pattern of equally high expectation. According to Herr and

Watanabe (1979) "possessing what others view as unlimited potential, gifted and talented students are extremely vulnerable to pressures from parents, peers, and teachers or indeed, the larger society to behave in particular ways or to perform certain types of roles" (p. 254). It is generally accepted that all students are attempting to live up to expectations defined by significant others, but it seems likely that academically talented students are contending with high levels of external expectation, making it increasingly difficult to stay focused on their specific needs. Gordon (1983) appropriately points to the fact that such students often have difficulty "identifying their own needs", because of expectations and pressures imposed upon them by significant others. The "potential" or "promise for the future" factor that is imposed upon students of high academic capability can be a powerful determinant in their personal and career development.

The aspect of personal development of particular interest to this investigation was that of global self-esteem. Global self-esteem for the purposes of this study was defined by Rosenberg (1979), a person is characterized "as having high self-esteem when he/she

has self-respect, and considers him/herself a person of worth. A person demonstrating high self-esteem appreciates his/her merits, but recognizes his/her faults. Low self-esteem means that the individual lacks respect for him/herself, considers him/herself unworthy, inadequate or otherwise seriously deficient as a person" (cited in Wylie, 1989, p. 24).

Career development literature suggests a link between levels of self-esteem and the career decision-making processes of college students. Serling and Betz (1990) found that fear of commitment, defined as "a reduced ability to make important decisions (e.g. career choice) due to perceptions of negative outcomes after decisions", was negatively related to self-esteem (p. 91). Lucas and Epperson (1990) attempted to identify "patterns of problems" among subgroups of career undecided college students. Of the entire undecided sample, the students who emerged most in need of intervention were those who scored the lowest on vocational identity, highest on anxiety, lowest on self-esteem, demonstrated little or no interest in work or relationship activities, exhibited external locus of control, demonstrated dependent decision-making style, high need for occupational information and high

perception of barriers. This type of student was described as "distressed, unclear about his/her career options, and relying on other's help and approval when making decisions" (p. 386).

The above mentioned studies certainly suggest that career decidedness may, to an extent, be a function of one's level of self-esteem. However, most of the information regarding self-esteem and career decision-making is based upon the general college population. Career development research examining the variables of global self-esteem and career decidedness in academically talented students is sparse. There is, however, considerable reason to believe that academically talented students contending with the issues of multipotentiality, extraordinary levels of external expectation and heightened difficulty in identification of individual needs and values, may demonstrate difficulty with their feelings of self-esteem and, consequently, exhibit career indecision.

The purpose of this investigation, which was exploratory in nature, was to gain insight into factors related to the career decision-making processes of academically talented college students. In particular, the role of global self-esteem in the career decision-

making processes of college honors students was examined.

Method

Subjects

A non-probability purposeful sampling technique was employed in this study. Subjects were recruited on the basis of their Fall, 1992 enrollment in the University of Rhode Island's honors courses. This intact group of academically talented college students was defined based upon their eligibility to enroll in the University's honors courses (freshmen: top 10% of high school class; sophomore, junior, senior: cumulative grade-point-average of 3.2 or better). Of the total population of eligible undergraduates, only a limited number actually enroll in the honors curriculum. In fact, students enrolled in the Fall, 1992 honors courses represented six percent of the total number of honors eligible undergraduates. A total of 123 students were officially registered for honors credits in the Fall of 1992. However, four of the students who were registered for the "Honors Project", an independent tutorial coordinated with a faculty mentor, were not targeted for participation in this study. It was determined that the uniqueness of

the tutorial students' learning situation did not allow for data collection in a manner similar to subjects enrolled in traditional honors courses. In addition, a number of the subjects were enrolled in more than one of the ten honors courses offered during the Fall of 1992.

The final sample was comprised of 87 subjects, 66 of which were female (76%), while 21 were male (24%). The data collected from four subjects was ultimately discounted. Three of the subjects were excluded on the basis of the fact that they were below the age of 18 years. The fourth subject was excluded due to the inappropriateness of his responses (the subject altered the format of the testing instrument). Subjects represented all academic grade levels, with 36 freshmen (41%); 14 sophomores (16%); 20 juniors (23%) and 17 seniors (20%). Subjects ranged in age from 18 years to 66 years, however, ninety one percent of the sample was characterized as traditional college age (18 years to 22 years). The majority of subjects described themselves as Caucasian (97%), with a limited number of Asian (2%) and Hispanic (1%) subjects. With respect to college major, a large portion of the subjects reported majors from the College of Arts and Sciences (61%),

while representation from other colleges was as follows: College of Business Administration (5%); College of Continuing Education (1%); College of Engineering (3%); College of Human Science and Services (7%); College of Pharmacy (3%); and College of Resource Development (6%). A number of subjects reported that they were undecided with respect to college major (14%). Also, subjects who reported a double major represented 14% of the sample (see Appendix B). In response to the question regarding parents' highest level of education, almost half of the subjects (48%) reported their father's education at the bachelor level or higher. A lesser number of subjects (39%) reported their mother's education at the bachelor level or higher. Also, data was gathered on parents' occupations, however, this information was not categorized for descriptive purposes (see Appendix C). Finally, subjects were asked to indicate whether the University of Rhode Island represented their college of choice. Of the total number who gave usable responses, 53% reported the University of Rhode Island as their college of choice. A large percentage of those subjects whose college of choice was not the University of Rhode Island, listed private institutions as their

preference (83%). Also, 84% of the subjects who failed to attend or transferred from their college of choice cited finances as their reason (see Appendix D).

Instruments

This study involved the use of two standardized measurement instruments. The Career Decision Scale (Osipow, Carney, Winer, Yanico & Koschier, 1976) was employed for the purpose of measuring subjects' level of decidedness with respect to career (see Appendix E). The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) was employed for the purpose of measuring subjects' global self-esteem (see Appendix F). Both the Career Decision Scale and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale are widely used instruments that have, generally, been shown to be valid and reliable. In addition, a demographic information sheet, created solely for the purpose of this study, was utilized (see Appendix G).

The Career Decision Scale is a 19 item assessment of an individual's status in the educational/vocational decision-making process. The instrument, which is of the Likert type, requires that subjects respond to statements on a four point scale ranging from (4) exactly like me to (1) not at all like me. The Certainty Scale, which is the sum of the first two

items, indicates the extent to which an individual has decided on a major or career. The remaining items, 3 to 18, comprise a measure of career indecision (Osipow, 1987).

The reliability of the Career Decision Scale is supported by Osipow, Carney and Barak (1976) who yielded two-week test-retest correlations of $r = .90$ and $r = .82$ on two separate samples of college-aged students. The reliability of the Career Decision Scale is further supported by Slaney, Palko-Nonemaker and Alexander (1981), in their investigation of two measures of career indecision, where a six-week test-retest correlation of $r = .70$ was demonstrated utilizing a college-aged population. Finally, the reliability of the Career Decision Scale was analyzed in the present study. The Certainty Scale of the Career Decision Scale yielded a Cronbach alpha coefficient of $r = .76$. The Indecision Scale of the Career Decision Scale yielded a Cronbach alpha coefficient of $r = .86$. Overall, the Career Decision Scale yielded a Cronbach alpha coefficient of $r = .88$.

The validity of the Career Decision Scale is supported by Osipow and Schweikert (1981) who examined

the relationship between the Career Decision Scale and the Assessment of Career Decision Making utilizing college freshman. The Indecision Scale of the Career Decision Scale was found to be inversely correlated with the Assessment of Career Decision Making ($r = -.27$) (cited in Osipow, 1987, p. 8). Additionally, Slaney (1980), utilizing a college-aged sample, found that the Career Decision Scale differentiated subjects, in the expected manner, on a comparison of subject responses to the Occupational Alternatives Question (cited in Osipow, 1987, p. 8). Cellini (1978) substantiated the relationship between career indecision, as measured by the Career Decision Scale, and external locus of control, when he found a significant relationship between subjects who scored high on external orientation and high on the Need for Structure factor of the Career Decision Scale. (cited in Osipow, 1987, p. 9). Taylor (1979) in her study of vocational indecision, fear of success, and locus of control, found all variables to be interrelated (cited in Osipow, 1987, p. 9). Lastly, data analysis in the present study demonstrated an inverse relationship between the Certainty Scale of the Career Decision Scale and the Indecision Scale of the Career Decision

Scale ($r = -.62$). It was expected that subjects demonstrating greater degrees of career certainty would demonstrate lesser degrees of career indecision, while subjects demonstrating low levels of career certainty would demonstrate high levels of career indecision.

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is a ten item measure of global self-esteem constructed on the basis of the following theoretical considerations: (a) ease of administration; (b) economy of time; (c) unidimensionality; and (e) face validity (Rosenberg, 1965, p. 15). The Self-Esteem Scale was scored by two different methods for the purposes of this study. The Self-Esteem Scale I was scored in a Likert-scale manner, with a possible range of scores from 10-40. The Self-Esteem Scale II was scored utilizing criterion-referenced scoring, with a possible range of scores from 1-10. Data analysis revealed a significant relationship between the scores of the Self-Esteem Scale I and the Self-Esteem Scale II ($r = .84$). However, this correlation suggests that scores on global self-esteem, as measured by the Self-Esteem Scale, vary according to the type of scoring procedure employed.

The reliability of the Self-Esteem Scale is reasonably sound. Wylie (1989), in a review of the Scale, reports the internal consistency as demonstrated by a number of studies utilizing a variety of populations, yielding coefficients ranging from $r_s = .72-.87$. The present study also analyzed the internal consistency of the Self-Esteem Scale. When criterion-referenced scoring was employed, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was $r = .77$. The Likert-scale scoring yielded a Cronbach alpha coefficient of $r = .89$. With respect to test-retest reliability, Silber and Tippet (1965) yielded a test-retest correlation of $r = .85$ utilizing a college-aged sample. Fleming and Courtney (1984), utilizing a college-aged sample, found a test-retest correlation of $r = .82$ on the Self-Esteem Scale, and a coefficient alpha of $r = .88$, suggesting sound item consistency. This same study also demonstrated convergent validity with respect to the Self-Esteem Scale. Fleming and Courtney found the following correlations between the Self-Rating subscales and the Self-Esteem Scale: Self Regard, .78; Social Confidence, .51; School Abilities, .35; Physical Appearance, .42; Physical Abilities, .35; and total, .66 (p. 414). Silber and Tippet (1965) "using a

multitrait-multimethod matrix analysis, correlated scores from the Self-Esteem Scale with three other measures of self-esteem" (Subject Satisfaction, Difference between Self and Ideal Self and Difference between Self and Social Self). They reported correlations of $r_s = .67, .83, \text{ and } .56$ " (cited in Byrne, 1983, p. 119). Also, "tests for discriminant validity by Silber and Tippet (1965) showed correlations of $r_s = .40, .34, \text{ and } .21$ with measures of Self-Stability" (cited in Byrne, 1983, p. 119). Guterman (1982), in a study of adolescents, found scores on the Locus-of-Control Scale to be related to Self-Esteem Scale scores with r_s of $.24, .22, \text{ and } .22$ (cited in Wylie, 1989, p.34).

Finally, with respect to the demographic sheet, which was created solely for the purposes of this study, information was gathered on subjects' age, gender, race, college major and academic grade level. These variables were included for descriptive purposes. Also included were questions regarding parents' highest level of education and parents' occupation. This information was gathered to explore the role of external expectation, as defined by parent's education,

in the personal and career development of the subjects. Subjects were also asked to indicate whether the University of Rhode Island represented their first choice in the college selection process. This information was considered relevant to the study because subjects' preference for a particular college, and the subsequent expectation that may arise from this preference, might have affected their career decision-making processes. Subjects were asked to report on their utilization of the University of Rhode Island's Career Services. Finally, subjects were asked to indicate whether they participated in University sponsored extracurricular activities. This question was deemed relevant to the study for two reasons. First, the literature suggests a link between self-esteem and participation in extracurricular activity in college students, and secondly, the literature suggests that academically talented students demonstrate great variety in their interests.

Procedure

A one time cross sectional research design was employed in this study of the University of Rhode Island's Fall, 1992 honors students. A letter of explanation regarding the purpose and goals of the

study was sent to the ten Fall honors course instructors. This letter sought the cooperation of the honors faculty, and specifically addressed the researcher's desire to perform data collection during class instruction time (see Appendix H).

The researcher contacted the honors faculty by phone within one week of the mailing of the initial letter. The intent of the phone call was to address and alleviate concerns that individual faculty members may have had with respect to the research project, and to make specific arrangements regarding data collection during scheduled class time. Nine of ten honors faculty members allowed data collection to occur during class time, while one faculty member desired that data collection occur immediately following class time.

The researcher performed data collection without the accompaniment of an assistant in seven of the ten classes. However, a research assistant was employed to assist in data collection in two of the classes, and the research assistant alone performed data collection in the remaining class.

The research packet containing a letter of informed consent (see Appendix I), the demographic sheet, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and the Career

Decision Scale was test piloted for the purpose of determining its approximate time of completion. Four of the seven subjects who participated in the test pilot were recruited based upon their enrollment in a graduate level professional seminar, while three of the test pilot subjects were easily accessible acquaintances of the researcher. It was determined that the research packet would take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

The researcher or assistant covered the following points in their opening remarks to the prospective subjects: (a) subject participation was requested and it was explained that subject involvement would be limited to the completion of a research packet containing three questionnaires (demographic sheet, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and the Career Decision Scale); (b) it was explained that little information had been gathered on the needs of the University's honors students; (c) the nature of the study was summarized by stating that it was an examination of the relationship between self-descriptions of honors students and career decision-making; (d) subjects were advised that their participation in the study was strictly voluntary and that non-participation would not

affect their involvement in the course or the University's Honors Program; (e) it was reiterated that subject participation was strictly anonymous; (f) subjects were advised that the research findings would be available via the Honors Program; (g) subjects who were enrolled in more than one Fall honors course were advised to complete the survey on a single occasion; and (h) subjects' questions were answered by the researcher or assistant.

Having stated the above, the researcher or assistant handed a single packet to each subject and requested that upon completion of the packet the subject raise his/her hand, at which time the researcher collected the packet. The researcher or assistant also examined each packet as it was collected so as to ensure that the consent form was retained by the subject. Upon completion of the testing in each class, the researcher or assistant responded to comments and reactions from the subjects, and thanked the subjects as well as the course instructor for their time and cooperation. The researcher also sent a follow-up thank you letter to each honors faculty member (see Appendix J).

Finally, subjects were treated in accordance with the ethical standards of the University of Rhode Island Institutional Review Board and the American Psychological Association's (APA) Principle 9, Research With Human Participants, in the "Ethical Principles of Psychologists" (APA, 1981).

Results

Simple Regressions of Self-Esteem and Career Decision. The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship of global self-esteem to career decision making in college honors students. The predictive nature of these variables was analyzed by several simple regressions where the criterion or dependent variable was career decidedness, while the predictor or independent variable was global self-esteem. The findings support the null hypothesis that no significant relationship exists between the variables of global self-esteem and career decision-making in college honors students (see Tables 1, 2, 3, 4,).

Insert Tables 1, 2, 3, 4, about here

Multiple Regressions of Self-Esteem on Career Decision. Multiple regression analyses, which included subject age, gender, father's education, mother's education and self-esteem scores as predictors of career decision-making, were performed. No significant relationships were found (see Tables 5,6).

Insert Table 5, 6 about here

Subject Responses to the Self-Esteem Scale. The Self-Esteem Scale is intended to measure an individual's global sense of self-worth. As previously mentioned, the Self-Esteem Scale was scored utilizing two different scoring procedures. Table 7 contains means and standard deviations on the Self-Esteem Scale. Both the Likert-scale scoring and the criterion-referenced scoring yielded averages that generally suggest high levels of global self-esteem on the part of subjects in this sample. The Likert-scale scoring procedure yielded an overall mean score of 33.54 (maximum score = 40), with a standard deviation of 4.71. Descriptive statistics on Likert-scale scoring were not available (Wylie, 1989). The criterion-

referenced scoring procedure yielded an overall mean score of 8.72 (maximum score = 10), with a standard deviation of 1.74 (see Table 7).

Insert Table 7 about here

The above mentioned averages suggest that subjects are exhibiting positive feelings of global self-worth, an examination of specific Self-Esteem Scale items revealed that a number of subjects are realizing some difficulty with respect to global self-esteem. The most revealing item in this regard was number 9, "I certainly feel useless at times." A reasonably high percentage of subjects either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement as descriptive of themselves (38%). Item number 8, "I wish I could have more respect for myself", generated a similar response from subjects, with 32% of subjects reporting that they agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. These findings suggest that a number of subjects are, to an extent, struggling with their feelings of self-worth.

Subject Responses to the Career Decision Scale.

The Career Decision Scale is intended to assess an individual's status with respect to career decision-making. The instrument, which is comprised of two subscales, first measures the individual's level of certainty with respect to college major and/or career. Secondly, the instrument measures the individual's level of career indecision. It is expected that the two scales would be inversely related. As previously mentioned, data analysis revealed that the Certainty Scale and the Indecision Scale were related in the expected manner ($r = - .62$). With respect to the Certainty Scale, data analysis revealed that subjects, in general, demonstrated high levels of certainty with respect to major and/or career. The overall mean score on the Certainty Scale was 5.57 (maximum score = 8), with a standard deviation of 1.74 (see Table 7). In a comparison to normative data, the mean score on the Certainty Scale realized in this study did not approach the percentile (15th) determined to significantly indicate uncertainty with respect to major and/or career. The Indecision Scale yielded an overall mean score of 28.87 (maximum score = 48), with a standard deviation of 7.72 (see Table 7). In a comparison to

the available normative data, the mean indecision score did not approach the percentile (85th) considered to be reflective of significant levels of indecision.

With respect to individual item analysis on the Career Decision Scale, the findings support the notion that the subjects in this sample were generally decided about their careers. For example, item 1, "I have decided on a career and feel comfortable with it. I also know how to go about implementing my choice", generated a subject response of 54% indicating that this statement was very much or exactly like them. In addition, item 19, an open-ended question that allowed subjects to describe themselves, revealed a similar sense of conviction with respect to career choice on the part of subjects who chose to answer the question. Those who answered question 19 represented 39% of the sample, and 53% of these subjects described themselves as very decided about their major and/or career goals (see Appendix L). In response to item 2, "I have decided on a major and feel comfortable with it. I also know how to go about implementing my choice", 72.4% of the subjects reported that this statement was very much or exactly like them. This finding is not quite congruent with a self-report question regarding

college major where 86% of the subjects reported a college major.

While, overall, subjects appear to have demonstrated low levels of career indecision, there are specific item responses that revealed that a number of subjects are realizing some difficulty with the career decision-making process. Item 4, "Several careers have equal appeal to me. I'm having a difficult time deciding among them", generated a strong affirmative response from subjects with 39% reporting that this statement was very much or exactly like them. This finding supports the assumption that academically talented students often have difficulty narrowing their career interests. These subjects are apparently faced with competing career interests. With respect to item 10, "I want to be absolutely certain that my career choice is the "right" one, but none of the careers I know about seem ideal for me", 23 % of subjects reported this statement to be very much or exactly like them. The literature reveals that academically talented students are very often concerned with investments of both time and money with respect to career options. The above finding suggests that a

number of subjects in this sample are seeking the "perfect" career fit.

Item 13, "I can't make a career choice right now because I don't know what my abilities are", tended not to be descriptive of this sample with only 13.7% of subjects reporting this statement as very much or exactly like them. Item 14, "I don't know what my interests are. A few things 'turn me on' but I'm not certain that they are related in any way to my career possibilities", generated a similar response from subjects with only 13.8% of the sample reporting this statement as very much or exactly like them. These findings suggest that for subjects who might be career undecided, it is not likely due to a lack of self-knowledge.

Subject response to item 15, "So many things interest me and I know I have the ability to do well regardless of what career I choose. It's hard for me to find just one thing that I would want as a career", supports the concept of multipotentiality as playing a prominent role in the career decision-making processes of a number of subjects in this sample with 58.6% reporting this statement as very much or exactly like them. Subject responses to item 17, "I need more

information about what different occupations are like before I can make a career decision", suggest that a large percentage of subjects are lacking the occupational knowledge required to effectively make a career decision (48.2%).

Finally, with respect to item 19, an open-ended question where subjects described themselves, the range of responses was categorized as such: (a) subjects who reported themselves decided about a major and/or career (53%); (b) subjects who reported themselves decided about major and/or career but desired more information (6%); (c) subjects who reported themselves decided about college major and/or career but cited multiple interests (17%); (d) subjects who reported themselves undecided about major and/or career and cited multiple interests (20%); and (e) subjects who reported themselves generally undecided (4%).

Subjects' Utilization of Career Services.

The primary focus in studying these 87 honors students was to determine the nature of the relationship between global self-esteem and career decision-making. Because this study was specific to career decision-making, data were collected on subjects possible involvement with

the Career Services Office of the University of Rhode Island. It was determined that a high percentage of subjects reported that they had not utilized Career Services (82.8%).

With respect to the specific breakdown of career services utilized by 16.1% of the sample, it was determined that 5.7% of subjects had engaged in individual career counseling, 6.9% of subjects had utilized the Career Resource Library, and 3.4% had utilized SIGIPlus (SIGIPlus is a computerized career development program, which enables individuals to evaluate their skills, values, and interests, as well as research occupational information). Also, a mere 1.1% of subjects in the sample indicated involvement with the University of Rhode Island Employer Recruitment Program, while 2.3% of subjects reported that they had been involved with career-related workshops on topics such as resume writing, interviewing skills, and job search strategies. Given the fact that virtually 20% of the sample was comprised of seniors, the above mentioned data, regarding minimal involvement with the Employer Recruitment Program and career development programming presents reason for concern.

Subjects' Involvement in Extracurricular Activity.

It was determined that a high percentage of the subjects were involved in extracurricular activities (59.8). The range of involvement included (a) student activities/organizations (31%); (b) honor societies (21%); (c) sports-related activities (18%); (d) Greek life (11%); (e) residential life (7%); (f) pre-professional organizations (7%); (g) religiously-affiliated activities (3%); and (h) research projects (2%) (see Appendix K). Also, the data revealed that 53% of those subjects who reported extracurricular involvement indicated 2 or more activities. These findings appear to substantiate the contention that academically talented students demonstrate a wide variety of interests, although no comparative data are available.

Additional Findings. The following variables were examined in a correlation matrix: age, gender, father's education, mother's education, Self-Esteem scores I, Self-Esteem scores II, Certainty Scale scores and the Indecision Scale scores. Analysis revealed that subject age was positively related to scores on the Self-Esteem Scale I, yielding a coefficient $r = .23$, $p < .01$, two tailed. Being a female was found to be

related to mother's education, $r = .24$, $p < .05$.

Father's education was positively related to mother's education $r = .28$, $p < .01$, two tailed. The Self-Esteem Scale I was positively related to Self-Esteem Scale II $r = .84$, $p < .01$, two tailed. The Certainty Scale of the Career Decision Scale was positively related to father's education $r = .25$, $p < .05$. Finally, the Indecision Scale of the Career Decision Scale was inversely related to the Certainty Scale of the Career Decision Scale $r = -.62$, $p < .01$, two tailed. No other relationships were significant.

Discussion

The primary goal of this exploratory study was to investigate variables related to career decision-making in academically talented college students. Specifically, the relationship between global self-esteem and career decision-making in college honors students was analyzed. Although, the findings of this study demonstrated no significant predictive relationship between the variables of global self-esteem and career decision-making in the University of Rhode Island Fall, 1992 honors population, valuable information regarding the career development needs of this group was found.

Global Self-esteem

Overall, the results of this study revealed that the Fall, 1992 honors population demonstrated high levels of global self-esteem. It can be said, in general, that these subjects exhibited a sense of self-respect, felt that they were people of worth and that they appreciated their merits, yet recognized their faults (Rosenberg, 1979). While this may be true of the group collectively, the results also revealed that some of the subjects exhibited difficulty with their global sense of self-worth.

Kerr and Erb (1991) state that "the issue of developing purpose may be unusually important for the bright college students" (p. 309). The idea that academically talented college students may be particularly focused on the development of a sense of purpose in their identity formation process emerged as a legitimate topic for future inquiry, given the finding in this study that more than one third of the subjects reported feeling a sense of uselessness at times. It is quite possible that academically talented honors students demonstrate an increased desire for focus and purpose in their identity and career development. However, data from the present study do

not convincingly distinguish this as something other than normal development.

Career Decision-Making

In general, the subjects in this sample appeared to be reasonably certain about their choice in college major and/or career. However, the findings tended to lend support to a number of assumptions about academically talented college students. The issue of multipotentiality, whereby individuals demonstrate a variety of interests and have the intellectual ability to pursue any number of them, seemingly characterizes a number of subjects in this sample. Evidence to support this contention was found in subject responses to three particular items on the Career Decision Scale. First, more than one third of subjects reported affirmative responses to the statement, "Several careers have equal appeal to me. I'm having a difficult time deciding among them". Secondly, more than half of the sample responded affirmatively to the statement, "So many things interest me and I know I have the ability to do well regardless of what career I choose. It's hard for me to find just one thing that I would want as a career", and finally, over two thirds of the subjects

who answered the open-ended self-descriptive question reported multiple major and/or career interests.

There are a number of other subject responses to the Career Decision Scale that indicate that certain subjects are experiencing difficulty with career decision-making. Two significant contributory components to career decision-making include self-assessment, where an individual develops an awareness of their skills, interests and values, and the acquisition of occupational knowledge. Self-awareness and occupational knowledge equip the individual for career decision-making. In the present study, it was determined that, in general, subjects were not lacking awareness specific to their abilities and interests. The evidence for this was garnered from subject responses to two statements. First, "I can't make a career choice right now because I don't know what my abilities are". Second, "I don't know what my interests are. A few things 'turn me on' but I'm not certain that they are related in any way to my career possibilities". A very small percentage of the sample reported these statements as descriptive of themselves. The more revealing information was found in subject responses to the statement, " I need more information

about what different occupations are like before I can make a career decision", where virtually half of the sample affirmed this statement.

Career Services Involvement. A high percentage of subjects reported that they had not utilized career services. The general findings suggest that a number of subjects are experiencing some difficulty with career decision-making, and yet these subjects may not be seeking assistance from the Career Services Office at the University of Rhode Island. Career services is not only designed to meet the needs of career undecided students, but also to meet the general career development needs of any student. It is possible that the honors students in this sample are not attracted to the services provided by the Career Services Office at the University of Rhode Island because these services do not consider the unique career development issues of this group. For example, the problematic nature of subjects' multipotentiality might be considered. One can see how a pattern of frustration might develop for the individual who wishes to make a career or vocational choice while exhibiting competency and interest in multiple areas. Kerr and Colangelo (1988) point to the "confusion or even apathy a multipotential

student must feel in the face of an overwhelming number of possibilities" (p. 42). This issue alone is a strong argument for more career information and counseling for academically talented students.

An alternative explanation for the limited involvement with Career Services is that more than half of the subjects in the sample were first and second year students whose counseling and advisement needs may have been met via University College. All first year students at the University of Rhode Island are initially admitted to University College and may continue their enrollment into their second year. University College provides counsel and advisement to students with respect to academic programming.

Involvement with Extracurricular Activity. Kerr and Colangelo (1988) studied the college plans of academically talented students and found high rates of participation in extracurricular activities. This data coupled with the literature that academically talented students have an increased likelihood of multiple interests supports the finding that essentially 60% of subjects in this sample indicated some form of extracurricular involvement. Subjects extracurricular involvement ranged from general student

activities/organizations to research projects. Also indicative of subjects' varied interests was the finding that over half of the subjects who reported extracurricular involvement indicated two or more extracurricular activities. Comparative data with respect to subjects' extracurricular involvement were not available.

Background Variables

According to Maurice Klein, Director of the University of Rhode Island Honors Program, the enrollment of the Fall, 1992 honors courses was, generally, characteristic of past populations. The enrollment, however, does vary somewhat as a function of the curriculum. The University of Rhode Island Honors Program requests course proposals from faculty who wish to teach within the program. This course application process can play a major role in shaping the characteristics of the University of Rhode Island honors population. The following describes the Fall, 1992 honors curriculum. First, 8 of 10 honors courses, in which data were collected, were from the Arts and Sciences (Anthropology, History, Art, Literature and Sociology). Secondly, 6 of the 10 honors courses were taught at the 100-level, defined by the University of

Rhode Island Faculty Senate as lower-division undergraduate courses (HPR101, HPR103, HPR112R, HPR112S, HPR114C and HPR115C), while 4 of the courses were taught at the 300-level, defined as upper-division undergraduate courses (HPR312S, HPR314D, HPR315J and HPR411D). The data from this study revealed high representation from women, first and second year students and students majoring in the Arts and Sciences. These demographic characteristics were attributable, in part, to the nature of the honors curriculum offered during the Fall semester of 1992 at the University of Rhode Island.

Gender. The gender composition of the group, where more than two thirds of the group were women, was typical of the University of Rhode Island honors enrollment (M. Klein, Director, University of Rhode Island Honors Program, personal communication, May 14, 1993). According to Holkeber (1984) high female representation in honors programs is reflective of a national trend (cited in Typical Profile of an Honors Population: Eastern Michigan, 1984). The gender pattern realized in the present sample may be attributable to the fact that virtually all of the honors courses offered in the Fall of 1992 were from

the Arts and Sciences. Many academic programs from the Arts and Sciences are traditionally female-dominated areas of collegiate study. To highlight this point further, virtually 40% of the males in the sample were those enrolled in one of the two Business courses offered as part of the Fall, 1992 honors curriculum. These males were enrolled in either "Introduction to Macro-Economics or "The Political Economy of New World Orders: from Columbus to Bush". For males enrolled in traditionally male-dominated areas of study at the University of Rhode Island in the Fall of 1992, such as business, engineering and computer science, honors course opportunity was extremely limited or non-existent. This factor may have contributed to the small number of males in the present sample.

Class Level. With respect to the academic class level, where more than half of the sample was comprised of first and second year students, it is highly probable, given the fact that 6 of the 10 courses were taught as lower-division undergraduate classes, that this representation was more a function of the Fall, 1992 honors curriculum than anything else. In addition, lower-division courses at the University of Rhode Island tend to have greater enrollment capacity

than upper-division courses. Another point to consider is that as students progress from first year to senior year, their degree requirements typically become more restrictive. Therefore, it is likely that honors eligible juniors and seniors have less choice built into their curriculum and are less likely to be represented in honors courses.

Academic Program. With respect to the academic programs cited by subjects in this sample, the largest representation came from the Arts and Sciences. This finding is consistent with the general enrollment at the University of Rhode Island, where 37% of the 1991-1992 undergraduate student body majored in academic programs from the College of Arts and Sciences (J. Allen, Academic Advisor, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Rhode Island, personal communication, May 25, 1993). In addition, Holkeber's honors profile from Eastern Michigan University yielded a similar enrollment pattern with almost 50% of students having reported academic programs from the Arts and Sciences (1984). Furthermore, as previously mentioned, 8 of the 10 honors courses taught in the Fall of 1992 were in subjects characterized as Arts and Sciences. Also, it is generally true that students concentrating in the

business and technological areas are very often more restricted in terms of their curriculum requirements, and therefore, are less likely to fit an honors course into their program of study. The above mentioned factors may account for the lesser number of subjects from colleges other than the College of Arts and Sciences.

Another characteristic of the Fall, 1992 honors population was that a high percentage of the subjects in this sample reported a double major (14%). Comparatively, the University's general 1992-1993 undergraduate population revealed a mere 3% of students majoring in two areas of study (J. Lawrence, Director, Institutional Research, University of Rhode Island, personal communication, May 26, 1993). This increased likelihood of a double major lends a degree of support to the supposition that academically talented students not only demonstrate variety in their interests, but possess the ability and competency to act upon these multiple interests (Frederikson, 1979; Herr & Watanabe, 1979; and Sanborn, 1979).

Age. As previously stated the age range of this honors sample was from 18 years to 66 years. Holkeber's profile of honors students enrolled in

Eastern Michigan University yielded a range in age from 16 years to 60 years (1984). In the present study, data collected from subjects below the age of 18 years were discounted. The vast majority of subjects were of traditional college age (18-22 years).

Race. In regards to the preponderance of subjects who described themselves as Caucasian (97%), this trend parallels the composition of the general population at the University of Rhode Island (1992-1993 multicultural population = 7.3%) and the nation, where minority representation is limited. One must also consider that a certain number of minority students are often educationally underprepared and thereby precluded from honors enrollment.

Parents Education. In reference to parents' level of education, virtually half of the sample reported father's level of education at the bachelor level or higher (48%), while at least one third of the subjects reported mother's level of education at the bachelor level or higher (39%). It was not known whether the parents of students enrolled in the honors curriculum at the University of Rhode Island were more or less educated than the parents of students that comprised the general undergraduate population at the University.

However, in general, one might expect that college-educated parents place high value on the academic achievement of their children, given the popular notion that parents often want their children to match or preferably surpass their own level of success or achievement in life. Also, although parents occupations as reported by subjects in the honors group were not categorized, an overview of the raw data revealed a number of very professionally-oriented occupations, such as college professor, surgeon, accountant, engineer, scientist, nurse and teacher. These data suggest that a number of the subjects came from homes where achievement in terms of education and occupation was likely to be highly valued. Honors students in this circumstance may well be realizing the effects of very high levels of external expectation. It is generally understood that students of significant academic talent are subject to unusually high levels of expectation not only from their parents but from friends, teachers and society in general (Herr & Watanabe, 1979).

College of Choice. The findings revealed that the sample was virtually equally divided in terms of preference for the University of Rhode Island over

other colleges and universities. Generally, the selection of a college is a significant step in the career planning process. Students very often consider the academic programs of a particular college or university in their long-term career planning. For the 47% of the subjects in this sample who expected to attend a college or university other than the university of Rhode Island, the result may have emerged in terms of diminished motivation in regards to career decision-making. It is possible that subjects in this circumstance may exhibit lesser degrees of career certainty. Although the findings of this study did not directly support this contention, this supposition is worthy of future review.

Additional Discussion and Areas for Further Research

Although a predictive relationship between global self-esteem and career decision-making in this sample of academically talented honors students was not found, certain findings suggest further research in this area is warranted. As previously discussed, individual item analyses of both the Self-Esteem Scale and the Career Decision Scale revealed that a small portion of the subjects in this sample demonstrated negative feelings of self-worth and a small portion of the subjects were

seemingly struggling with the career decision-making process. The research design of the present study did not allow for specific analysis of these sub-groups, and of their possible relatedness. However, future research efforts that specifically target career undecided honors students, with the purpose of determining the component parts of their career decision-making difficulties, would offer more convincing evidence to support or negate the role of self-esteem in career decision-making amongst academically talented college students.

Another consideration for future research specific to self-esteem involves the assessment of the construct. The present study evaluated subjects' global self-esteem; future research may assess self-esteem utilizing a multidimensional approach, considering self-esteem specific to academics and/or family and peer relations. Data from this approach might allow greater specificity in one's discussion of the role of self-esteem in career decision-making. Other personality variables worthy of future review include anxiety and locus of control. Career development literature substantiates the value of examining these variables, however, little information

exists on these topics specific to academically talented students.

Additionally, future research efforts specific to academically talented honors students might include an analysis of subjects' motivation for enrolling in an honors curriculum. Research in the above mentioned area would lend greater insight into the role of external expectation in the career decision-making processes of such students.

Finally, although the findings of the present study lend credence to the assumption that academically talented college students exhibit unique career development needs, future research that specifically analyzes the career development differences between academically talented students and the general college population would more convincingly support this contention.

Implications

Given the literature on academically talented students in regards to their greater need for a sense of purpose, especially as it relates to career, a value-based approach to career planning seems appropriate. Such an approach would encourage the investigation of the student's value or belief system

in an effort to assist them in prioritizing their career options (Kerr & Erb, 1991).

Kerr (1986) in her discussion of career counseling for the gifted recommends that counselors take into account the "serious attitude" of academically talented students and consider that there is a demonstrated preference among this group for "structured, task-oriented interviews" (p. 603).

This study has, in part, substantiated the idea that academically talented college students, such as those enrolled in honors courses, do have career development needs worthy of special consideration by faculty, career counselors, academic advisors and other higher education professionals. Kerr and Colangelo (1988) discuss the fact that colleges and universities are assertively assessing and responding to the needs of sub-groups of the general college population. They propose that academically talented students might be considered a special sub-group of the higher education community, with unique needs and issues worthy of tailored services. Schroer and Dorn (1986) state that "little counseling effort is being directed toward academically gifted students at the college level. Furthermore, few programs are offered that help gifted

college students identify and rank their interests and abilities" (p. 567). It would seem, given the findings of this study, that career development interventions tailored to meet the needs of academically talented students are warranted.

Table 1

Simple Regression of Self-Esteem I on Career Certainty

			Analysis of Variance				
Source			DF	SS	MS	F	P
Multiple R	.0051	Regression	1	.0073	.0073	.002	.962
R Square	.0000	Residual	85	276.4755	3.2527		
Adjusted R Square	.0117						
Standard Error	1.8035						

Table 2

Simple Regression of Self-Esteem I on Career Indecision

			Analysis of Variance				
Source			DF	SS	MS	F	P
Multiple R	.1768	Regression	1	169.2042	169.2042	2.74	.101
R Square	.0313	Residual	85	5242.1982	61.6729		
Adjusted R Square	.0199						
Standard Error	7.8532						

Table 3

Simple Regression of Self-Esteem II on Career Certainty

								Analysis of Variance				
Source			DF	SS	MS	F	P					
Multiple R	.0619	Regression	1	1.0600	1.0600	.327	.569					
R Square	.0038	Residual	85	275.4227	3.2403							
Adjusted R Square	-.0079											
Standard Error	1.8001											

Table 4

Simple Regression of Self-Esteem II on Career Indecision

				Analysis of Variance				
Source				DF	SS	MS	F	P
Multiple R	.1248	Regression	1	84.2823	84.2823	1.345	.249	
R Square	.0156	Residual	85	5327.1200	62.6720			
Adjusted R Square	.0040							
Standard Error	7.9166							

Table 5

Multiple Regression of Age, Gender, Father's Education, Mother's Education, Self-Esteem I, Self-Esteem II on Career Certainty

Analysis of Variance							
Source			DF	SS	MS	F	P
Multiple R	.2783	Regression	6	19.0516	3.1753	1.049	.401
R Square	.0774	Residual	75	227.0094	3.0268		
Adjusted R Square	.0036						
Standard Error	1.7398						

Table 6

Multiple Regression of Age, Gender, Father's Education, Mother's Education, Self-Esteem I, Self-Esteem II on Career Indecision

Analysis of Variance							
Source			DF	SS	MS	F	P
Multiple R	.3184	Regression	6	489.9942	81.6657	1.410	.222
R Square	.1014	Residual	75	4342.7863	57.9038		
Adjusted R Square	.0295						
Standard Error	7.6095						

Table 7

Means and Standard Deviations of Scores on the
Self-Esteem I, Self-Esteem II, Certainty Scale and
Indecision Scale

Scale	M	SD	N
Self-Esteem I (Likert)	33.54	4.71	82
Self-Esteem II (Criterion)	8.72	1.74	82
Certainty Scale	5.57	1.74	82
Indecision Scale	28.87	7.72	82

Appendix A
Literature Review

Appendix A

Literature Review

Academically talented/honors students. This study examined the career decision-making processes of the University of Rhode Island's Fall, 1992 undergraduate honors population. Specifically, the study focused on global self-esteem and its relatedness to career indecision. While the body of literature on career indecision is generally considered substantial there are gaps with respect to special populations. Such is the case with college honors students. College honors students are generally characterized as academically talented, and it is often assumed that such students demonstrate generalized competency. However, according to Schuman (1989) "an important point to keep in mind as regards Honors advising is that Honors students can be expected to have at least as many, and as complicated, problems as any other student. It is sometimes tempting to envision the Honors student as well rounded, balanced, thoughtful, mature, and self-possessed. This does not seem a particularly accurate nor helpful vision, however attractive it may be" (p. 26). In fact, it is commonly perceived that students who possess academic talent do not require assistance

in their undertakings. This assumption is questionable because just as disadvantaged students require tailored supportive services to contend with their specific needs so do students of significant academic talent. Kerr and Colangelo (1988) state that "academically talented students may also have special needs that require specific, appropriate programs and services" (p. 42). Also, Perrone, Male and Karshner (1979) in their discussion of the career development needs of talented students state that such students "require some special programming" (p. 17).

Career planning/development is an area in which highly capable college students require specialized services. Gordon (1983) in her study of the career development needs of undecided honors students, highlights the need for "special academic and career advising" among this particular college population (p. 82). Also, Schroer and Dorn (1986) believe that "it is inappropriate to assume that gifted students can get along without adequate counseling and advising as they attempt to choose a college, a major and a career path" (p. 567).

Academic high achievers have unique career development needs. Such students often face career

development problems related to the issue of multipotentiality. According to Sanborn (1979) "typically the gifted and talented person can succeed in many areas and typically he or she will show interest in a wide variety of things" (p. 285). Most traditional students engaged in vocational decision-making will narrow their career focus to areas of specific interest and aptitude. This, however, is not easily accomplished by talented students with multiple interests and competencies. Such students, because of their varied interests and abilities are in the tenuous position of choosing from a wider variety of educational and career tracks than most other students. Furthermore, Delsie (1982) believes that "making career and personal choices can be overwhelming to the gifted individual who experiences multiple interests and abilities. Most gifted individuals have interests in an array of possible occupations and the potential for success in any one of them" (cited in Blackburn & Erickson, 1986, p. 553-554). Kerr and Erb (1991) propose that academically talented students struggle with identity development and realize frustration because of their multipotentiality. In fact, they state that "academically talented students have a

scattered, diffuse identity; they spread themselves too thin" (p. 309).

Career development research reveals a link between career indecision and anxiety. It would seem likely that the expansion of career options which often characterizes academically talented students might heighten levels of anxiety in those undecided about a career. In fact, Gordon (1983) found in her study of undecided honors students and regular undecided students, that honors students demonstrated higher anxiety scores (as measured by Spielberger's State-Trait Anxiety Inventory). This finding implies that honors students demonstrate greater vulnerability to anxiety and the varied difficulties that accompany it.

Additionally, academically talented students appear to be vulnerable to extraordinary levels of external expectation. According to Sanborn (1979) "recognition of giftedness or talent seems to result almost inevitably in both explicit and implicit presumptions that great things will be accomplished during education and career" (p. 290). Sanborn further states that "expectations of parents, teachers, friends and society in general operate to restrict their (talented students) range of career choices and to

pressure them to achieve high levels" (p. 284). Career indecision has been found to be related to external locus of control. It is probable, given the above, that external forces, to an extent, dictate the thoughts, actions, and emotions of highly capable students. This in turn, is likely to result in increased difficulty with career decision-making.

Career decision-making. An impressive body of literature exists on the topic of career decision-making. Researchers have examined this process utilizing a wide variety of populations, a significant number of which are specific to high school students. The career decision-making processes of college students have also received consideration by researchers, primarily because career decision-making is an integral aspect of the identity formation process that traditionally-aged college students undergo. Of particular interest to researchers has been the issue of career indecision among college students. Career indecision having been linked to college attrition is generally viewed to be problematic by most higher education professionals. Hall (1984) in her survey of college dropouts found "career indecision and change in career plans as reasons for leaving college" (p. 17).

In addition, Opp and Colby (1986) in their report on student retention, cite the importance of providing "career exploration and advising programs" to career undecided students because of the increased risk such students have in dropping out of college.

A great deal of controversy exists amongst educators as to the nature of career indecision. In fact, to a large extent, the factors related to the origins of career indecision remain unanswered. There are essentially three schools of thought with respect to career indecision. Traditionally, theorists have been divided by those who advocate a developmental view of career indecision and those who view it as a problematic characteristic related to personality dysfunction. Presently, however, the trend is toward an integrated view of career indecision that acknowledges its multidimensionality. First, the developmental view of career indecision purports it to be a typical "anticipated" stage of development among the college population. According to Grites (1981) being "undecided" about one's vocation may be "the best decision that a student could make" (p. 45). Grites points to the strengths of the undecided condition. This condition can be described as a positive holding

cell for students investigating their long-term career options. Also, Ducote (1984) in her discussion of career indecision advocates "career indecision as part of normal development rather than as an indication of serious psychological pathology" (p. 14). The implication of the developmental view of career indecision is that academic advisors, career counselors, faculty members and student affairs professionals, can, to a certain extent, rest easy, merely allowing career direction to take its predicted developmental course. This conceptual model of career indecision tends to encourage a passive approach on the part of those in higher education to this issue.

The alternative conceptual model of career indecision is one that defines it as problematic in nature, and likely to be symptomatic of further difficulties. According to Hartman and Fuqua (1983), "it is far too simple an approach to conceptualize career indecision as a natural developmental task for all those experiencing it" (p. 344). In fact, Hartman and Fuqua go on to state that some educationally or vocationally undecided students may be "experiencing a complex problem inseparable from dysfunctional personality characteristics" (p. 340). In a review of

the literature on career indecision, Hartman and Fuqua found relationships between career indecision, external locus of control, anxiety and identity confusion. In fact, they suggest "that undecided students could be characterized as being state and trait anxious, externally controlled, and confused as to their own identity (pp. 343-344). This view of career indecision dictates aggressive intervention on the part of higher education professionals. Hartman and Fuqua suggest that "the most productive research in the future will be directed toward providing counselors with a better understanding of career indecision on a practical level, by associating aspects of indecision with specific antecedent or component parts" (p. 344).

Finally, as previously mentioned, there is growing awareness that career indecision is complex and multidimensional in nature. Much of the current literature provides evidence to support the notion of subtypes of indecision. However, as early as 1969, Tyler made the distinction between students who were simply "undecided" and those who were "indecisive" when he described "indecision as a problem in regard to a plan of action and indecisiveness as a problem that derives from personal issues" (cited in Serling & Betz,

1990, p. 91). Also, Slaney (1988) discusses the distinction between those "persons who are undecided about their career and those who are generally indecisive. He proposed that the former may be a normal, developmental state that can be remedied by obtaining relevant career information or through standard career interventions. The latter may have more trait-like characteristics and respond only to more intensive, longer lasting treatment" (cited in Vondracek, Hosteler, Scholenberg and Shimizu, 1990, p. 98).

Additional evidence to support the existence of subtypes of career undecided students is provided by Fuqua and Hartman (1983) in their discussion of the differential diagnosis and treatment of career indecision. Fuqua and Hartman describe three dimensions or categories of career indecision: (1) developmental indecision, described as "a lack of information about self and career alternatives" (p. 28); (2) "acute situational indecision results directly from environmental stressors and indirectly from an ineffective reaction to the environment" (p. 28-29); (3) "chronic career indecision is best characterized by underlying psychological dysfunction" (p. 29).

The unidimensional conception of career indecision is further challenged by the research of Van Matre and Cooper (1984) who suggest "that there are two primary dimensions or continua along which delays or dysfunctions may occur in career decision-making. There are the "Decided - Undecided State" and the "Decisiveness - Indecisiveness Trait". "The state of decidedness-undecidedness is described as the transitory level of indecision that accompanies all decision-making tasks." The trait of decisiveness-indecisiveness is described as "a more enduring and consistent proneness when encountered by any decision-making task" (p.637).

Furthermore, Larson, Heppner, Ham and Dugan (1988) in their investigation of multiple subtypes of career indecision state that their "results suggest the existence of multiple subtypes of undecided students. On the basis of the data profiles on these students, it appears that these subtypes differ on several career-planning activities and especially on some problem-solving variables" (p. 445)." In addition, they propose that their "study provides rather strong empirical data against the uniformity myth for career indecision, which has clear implications for both

researchers and practitioners" (p. 445). Additionally, Lucas and Epperson (1990) in their replication of an earlier study of types of vocational undecidedness found evidence to support their contention that five different subtypes of undecidedness exist: Cluster 1 subjects were "described as distressed, unclear about his/her career options and relying on others' help and approval when making decisions." Cluster 2 subjects were described as "somewhat more anxious, have a lower self-esteem, and perceived barriers in the pursuit of their career goals." Cluster 3 subjects were described as "less anxious and indicated more of a need for information." Cluster 4 subjects were described as independent decision-makers, focused on the importance of work, yet demonstrated a degree of anxiety. Cluster 5 participants were described as intuitive decision makers who "do not perceive barriers in pursuit of their career goals" (p. 386). Finally, Newman, Fuqua and Seaworth (1989) state that "neither the dichotomous definition of career indecision, nor an exclusive developmental orientation in its treatment can be justified in light of a growing body of evidence revealing the complex and multidimensional nature of

career indecision as a psychological construct" (p. 221).

Traditionally, research efforts on the topic of career indecision have focused on defining the differences between individuals who have been characterized as career decided and those deemed career undecided. In fact, the vast majority of career indecision research highlights the correlates of indecision, including personality variables. Lucas and Epperson (1990) state that "some of the most convincing evidence of the complexity of career indecision is drawn from empirical studies of variables that relate to career indecision" (p. 382).

As previously noted, career indecision has been linked with anxiety as a personality characteristic. The research on anxiety and career indecision highlights the distinction between the concepts of state anxiety and trait anxiety. Spielberger (1972) "conceptualized state anxiety as a transitory emotional state characterized by a subjective, perceived experience of apprehension and tension that fluctuates over time and varies in intensity." "Trait anxiety was considered a stable characteristic reflecting individual differences in the tendency to perceive a

range of situations as threatening" (cited in Hartman & Fuqua, 1983, p. 341).

According to Kimes and Troth (1974) "most of the research has focused on career decision-making and the individual's current state of anxiety" (p. 277). However, Kimes and Troth "investigated the relationship between trait anxiety and different levels of satisfaction with career decision (p. 277). The findings of their investigation were that "students who were completely undecided about a career were significantly more anxiety-prone than were students who had chosen careers" (p. 277). In addition, it was found that there is "a possible inverse relationship between trait anxiety and satisfaction with a career decision" Therefore, "students who were fully satisfied with their career decision had the lowest mean trait score; students who were not really satisfied had the highest mean trait anxiety score" (p.279).

The relationship between anxiety and career indecision was further analyzed by Hawkins, Bradley and White (1977) who "found that anxiety and other negative affect measures could be used with some success to predict educational - vocational decidedness" In fact,

"it may be necessary to lessen a student's negative feelings about major and career planning in order to facilitate that student's career development" (p. 402). Also, Crites (1974) believes that "anxiety might be the primary negative effect charge responsible for beginning and perpetuating a cycle of anxiety and avoidance of tasks necessary to vocational development" (cited in Hawkins, Bradely and White, 1977, p. 398).

Finally, Fuqua, Seaworth, and Newman (1987) in their study of career indecision and anxiety reported that their "results clearly support the existing empirical research indicating that a substantial relationship exists between career indecision and anxiety" (p. 183). Given the above findings, it is evident that anxiety is significantly related to ineffective career decision-making.

Another variable that is correlated with anxiety and career indecision is external locus of control. According to Hartman and Fuqua (1983) "external locus of control is yet another kind of psychological variable that may precipitate or exacerbate career indecision" (p. 343). According to Lefcourt (1966) "external locus of control refers to the perception of positive and/or negative events as being unrelated to

one's own behavior in certain situations and therefore beyond personal control" (cited in Hartman and Fuqua 1983, p. 343). If an individual demonstrates external locus of control one can easily appreciate the increased likelihood that vocational decision-making will be problematic for such a person.

Self-Esteem. Given the complexity of the issues faced by academically talented students it seems likely that such students may demonstrate difficulty with personal as well as career development. This difficulty may translate into problems of self-esteem. In fact, Hedberg (1991) speaking in reference to female honors students states that "the single most common issue or problem which they (honors students) present is one of self-esteem, that is, the lack of it. Students have not learned to value themselves or to develop an appreciation of their own competence. Strange. They are usually highly intelligent in both the rational and intuitive modes of intelligence" (p. 10).

Also, Schuman (1989) states that "honors students, just like their non-honors peers, are sometimes plagued with doubts about their academic careers and their futures." "In fact, because their academic

expectations and goals are sometimes higher than those of their non-honors peers, honors students will sometimes seem to have more academic and personal counseling needs than other students" (p. 26).

Self-esteem very broadly reflects one's estimation of their self-worth. Coopersmith (1986) defines self-esteem as "the evaluation a person makes and maintains with regard to him or herself" (cited in Kinney and Miller, 1988, p. 359). While Bolus and Shavelson (1982) refer to self-esteem "as the perception of self, which is reinforced by self and others" (cited in Kinney and Miller, 1988, p. 359).

The body of knowledge that exists on the construct of self-esteem, while abundant, can also be described as diffuse. Self-esteem research is hindered by problems related to definition. The nature of the construct has continued to be debated and therefore, its measurability has subsequently been problematic. Some researchers contend that it is most meaningful to analyze and measure self-esteem in terms of its unidimensionality. In this case, one would examine global or general self-esteem. Marsh (1986) describes the measurement of global self-esteem as "those items that infer a general sense of self-worth or self-

confidence that could be applied to many specific areas" (p. 1224). Epstein (1980) states that "global self-esteem refers to an over-all evaluative set with wide-ranging implications for self-experience" (cited in O'Brien, 1985, p. 383). Other researchers are chiefly concerned with the multidimensional nature of self-esteem and firmly believe that its measurement must consider multiple facets in addition to a general measure (Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton, 1976; Fleming & Courtney, 1984). Fleming and Watts (1990) describe a rational approach to dealing with this problem by stating quite simply "that general self-esteem will prove more useful in some contexts and that subscales or factors are justifiable in other situations" (p. 922). Global self-esteem was the preferred variable in this study.

According to Epstein and O'Brien (1980) "global self-esteem scores may predict behavior across a wide range of situations" (cited in O'Brien, 1985, p. 381). Also, Pelham and Swann (1989) found in their study on the sources and structure of global self-esteem that "it appears that people's general sense of self-worth is determined by three distinct factors: (a) their positive and negative feelings about themselves, (b)

their specific beliefs about themselves, and (c) the way that they frame these beliefs" (p. 677).

Furthermore, "the frequent application of global self-esteem to the prediction and explanation of a wide variety of behavioral phenomena attests to the central role this variable has occupied in psychological theory and research" (Rosenberg, 1965; Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton, 1976; Wylie, 1974; cited in Shahani, Dipboye & Phillips, 1990, p. 276).

Global self-esteem for the purposes of this study was defined by Rosenberg (1979) who determined that a person is characterized as having "high self-esteem when he/she has self respect and considers him/herself a person of worth. A person demonstrating high self-esteem appreciates his/her merits, but recognizes his/her faults. Low self-esteem means that the individual lacks respect for him/herself, considers him/herself unworthy, inadequate or otherwise seriously deficient as a person" (cited in Wylie, 1989, p. 24). Wylie (1989) commenting on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale states that "although many researchers attempt to get a global self-esteem index by summing across scores for items of disparate content, this is obviously not Rosenberg's ideas of the appropriate approach. In his

view, one cannot safely make assumptions about which specific content areas to tap or how to evaluate the relative importance of each to the self-esteem of various respondents" (p. 24). Also, Wylie (1974) states "that the sum is simple expedient in the face of ignorance and should be so recognized" (cited in Marsh, 1986, p. 1224).

The self-esteem of college students has undergone considerable scrutiny. Researchers concerned with the identity development of traditionally-aged college students should not and have not ignored variables such as self-esteem, self-confidence and self-concept. What ensues is an overview of some of the most relevant findings regarding self-esteem in college students.

First, the literature reveals that male and female college students sometimes differ with respect to self-esteem. O'Brien (1991) studied sex differences in components of self-esteem and found that "men scored higher on Global Self-Esteem, Competence, Self-Control, Personal Power, Body Appearance and Body Functioning. Women scored higher on Lovability, Likeability, Moral Self-approval, and Defensiveness" (p. 241). O'Brien goes on to caution "that, while one should not ignore the existence of sex differences in self-esteem, it is

important to keep in mind that there is far more overlap than there is difference between the sexes in self-esteem" (p. 242).

Zuckerman (1985), in her study of self-esteem and self concepts as predictors of life goals, found that "men and women do not differ significantly on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale" (p. 552). In fact, her "results indicate that men and women in the sample are very similar in their life goals, self-esteem, interpersonal self-confidence and self-concepts" (p. 557). Also, Griffore, Kallen, and Popovich (1991) examined sex differences in correlates of college students' self-esteem and found that "for both men and women, self-esteem is associated with higher family income, internal locus of control, and positive sense of self-attractiveness" (p. 290). Other findings by Griffore et al (1991) were that "for women only self-esteem is significantly positively correlated with grade-point-average" and that "year in school is not related to self-esteem for either men or women" (p. 290).

Since the present study was specific to highly achieving college students, it is relevant to highlight the literature on self-esteem and its relationship to

achievement. Calsyn and Kenny (1977) "found that the influence of academic achievement on self-esteem exceeded the influence of self-esteem on achievement" (cited in Griffore, Kallen & Popovich, 1991, p. 287). Also, Kinney and Miller (1988) in their study of highly successful and remedial college students, state that "a significant relationship was present between self-esteem and achievement" (p. 360). Remedial students scored lower on self-esteem. Kinney and Miller suggest that "students with higher self-esteem scores are more likely and more motivated to set achievable career goals and thus are more likely to succeed at the university level" (p. 360).

Finally, self-esteem in college students has been linked to their levels of involvement or affiliation on and off-campus. Brennan (1985) examined the role of participation [defined as "an act or state of sharing in common with others, i.e., involvement of the student in activities outside required classwork and study, including activities in clubs, organized committees, sports and residential and social events" (p. 448)] on self-esteem. It was found that "all past activities at the university produced a significant increase in general self-esteem. This agreed with the theory

underlying the original hypothesis, that through involvement with others, learning about others and self, increasing self-confidence, and defining one's role in society, a person establishes self-esteem" (pp. 457-458).

Given the above findings, one can appreciate the crucial role of self-esteem in the development of college students. As previously mentioned, career decision-making is an integral and inevitable task for college students. The question of self-esteem for the purpose of this study examines whether a relationship exists between an honors student's global view of their self-worth and their level of career decidedness.

The literature suggests that career decidedness, to an extent, may be related to or a function of one's level of self-esteem. According to Resnick, Fauble & Osipow (1970) "positive and negative self-esteem may affect the rate of progress through vocational developmental tasks" (p. 466). In fact, in their study of vocational decision-making and self-esteem in college students, it was found that both men and women of high self-esteem expressed greater certainty about their career choices than did those of low self-esteem.

Furthermore, Korman (1967) demonstrated that "individuals high in self-esteem would be more likely to choose those occupations which they perceived to be likely to satisfy their specific needs and to be in keeping with their self-perceived characteristics than those individuals with low self-esteem (p. 65). This finding has implications for highly capable college students who exhibit low self-esteem. Are such students, who clearly demonstrate academic competency making career choices that are congruent with their feelings of low self-esteem?

The link between self-esteem and career indecision is further supported by Robbins (1987) who investigated career indecision, self-esteem, interest patterns and goal instability. Robbins suggests that "people with undifferentiated interest profiles may need to engage in exercises that build self-esteem. These people may not be able to identify clear likes and dislikes until they feel secure and self-accepting" (p. 295).

Also, Serling and Betz (1990) investigated the construct of "fear of commitment" and its role in the career decision-making processes of college students. Fear of commitment was defined as "a reduced ability to make important decisions (e.g. career choice) due to

perceptions of negative outcomes after decisions" (p. 91). The findings indicated that "fear of commitment was negatively related to self-esteem and was higher in undecided than decided students" (p. 95).

Finally, Lucas and Epperson (1990) attempted to "identify patterns of problems" among subgroups of career undecided college students. The subgroups of undecided students demonstrating the most significant problems were those who rated low and below average on global self-esteem.

Given the above, it seems likely that the role of self-esteem in the vocational decision-making processes of college students is worthy of examination. The function of self-esteem is of particular interest in students demonstrating high academic capability. This is true because it is often assumed that students of high academic capability are highly competent in their vocational decision-making tasks. However, this may not always be the case. As previously discussed, high academic achievers contend with unique career development problems. These problems involve the issues of multipotentiality, extraordinary levels of external expectation, greater vulnerability to anxiety, and heightened difficulty in identification of

individual needs and values. It also appears that one's self-esteem can enhance or inhibit the career decision-making processes of college students. Further investigation specific to this topic is warranted so that such needs may be expounded upon and ultimately addressed by higher education professionals.

Appendix B

Student Program and Academic College

Student Program and Academic College

Major	COLLEGE	FREQUENCY
APG	ARTS&SCIENCES	3
BIO	ARTS&SCIENCES	2
CSC	ARTS&SCIENCES	2
ECN	ARTS&SCIENCES	2
ENG	ARTS&SCIENCES	6
ENG&ART*	ARTS&SCIENCES	1
ENG&CLS*	ARTS&SCIENCES	1
ENG&ECN*	ARTS&SCIENCES	1
ENG&HIS*	ARTS&SCIENCES	1
ENG&SPE*	ARTS&SCIENCES	1
HIS	ARTS&SCIENCES	2
HIS&EDC*	ARTS&SCIENCES	1
JOR	ARTS&SCIENCES	1
JOR&HIS*	ARTS&SCIENCES	1
MAF	ARTS&SCIENCES	3
PHL	ARTS&SCIENCES	1
PSC	ARTS&SCIENCES	8
PSC&HIS*	ARTS&SCIENCES	2
PSC&JOR*	ARTS&SCIENCES	1
PSC&SOC*	ARTS&SCIENCES	1
PSY	ARTS&SCIENCES	3
PSY&ENG*	ARTS&SCIENCES	1
SOC	ARTS&SCIENCES	1
SOC&WMS*	ARTS&SCIENCES	1
SPA	ARTS&SCIENCES	1
SPE	ARTS&SCIENCES	2
ZOO	ARTS&SCIENCES	3
FIN	BUSINESS ADM	1
MKT	BUSINESS ADM	2
BUS	BUSINESS ADM	1
BGS	CONTINUING ED	1
CVE	ENGINEERING	1
ELE	ENGINEERING	1
MCE	ENGINEERING	1
DHY	HUMAN SCI&SERV	1
TMD	HUMAN SCI&SERV	1
HCF	HUMAN SCI&SERV	1
EDC	HUMAN SCI&SERV	3
PHC	PHARMACY	3
RDE	RESOURCE DEV	1
AVS	RESOURCE DEV	1
LAR	RESOURCE DEV	1
FSN	RESOURCE DEV	2
UNDECIDED		12

Note. Asterisks indicate double majors.

Appendix C

Subjects' Parental Occupations

Subjects' Parental Occupations

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Father</u>
01	Blank	Massage Therapist
02	Cook	Sheet Metal Mechanic
03	Accountant/Bookkeeper	Cell & Molecular Biologist
04	Secretary	Self-employed
05	Associate Professor	Accountant
06	Own Business	Own Business
07	Restaurateur	Senior Systems Analyst
08	Blank	Unemployed
09	Teacher(deceased)	Teacher(deceased)
10	Homemaker	Waiter
11	Librarian	Engineer
12	Housewife	Carpenter
13	Market Research	Sales
14	Blank	Electrician
15	Nurse	Accounts Payable Manager
16	Nuclear Med. Tech.	Supervisor-Providence Gas
17	Retail	Educational Administrator
18	Service Representative	Asst. Dir. Employee Relations
19	Travel Agent	Banker
20	Blank	Plant Manager
21	Office Manager	Bus. Rep.-Labor Union
22	Library Director	Airline Pilot
23	Blank	Banker
24	Personnel Secretary	Lithographer
25	English Professor	Interior Design
26	Lab Animal Specialist	Blank
27	Own Business	Psychiatrist
28	Office Manager	President of Co.
29	Secretary	Retail Executive
30	Eligibility Tech.	Director, Marketing
31	Deceased	Deceased
32	Bus. Ins. Director	Teacher/Coach
33	Psychologist	Lawyer
34	Legal Secretary	Blank
35	Teacher	Teacher/Realtor
36	Financial Manager	Painting Contractor
37	Registered Nurse	Vascular Surgeon
38	Secretary	Personnel Manager
39	High School Teacher	District Manger. Chrysler
40	Elementary Teacher	Garelick Farms
41	Accountant	V.P. of Company
42	V.P. State Youth Assoc.	Professor of Kinesiology
43	German Instructor	Professor of Marine Biology
44	Retire-Retail	Retired-Post Office
45	High School Teacher	Professor of Economics
46	Registered Nurse	Blank
47	Elementary Teacher	Air Conditioning Tech.
48	Daycare Provider	Water Maintenance
49	Teacher	Civil Engineer

Subjects' Parental Occupations

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Father</u>
50	Secretary	Custodian
51	Blank	Blank
52	S. N.E. Telephone	Claims Manager
53	Blank	Accountant
54	Activities Director	Research Scientist
55	Housewife	Govt. Supervisor
56	Records Clerk	Civil Engineer
57	Assembly line Wrk.	Mechanic
58	Dietitian	Self-employed
59	Secretary	Dir. Marketing
60	Sp. Ed. Teacher	Retired
61	Housewife	Foreign Exchange
62	Secretary	V.P. Sales
63	Elem. Teacher/Librarian	Library Administrator
64	Nurse/Bus. Owner	Commercial Pilot
65	Nurse	Self-employed
66	Accountant's Asst.	Mobile Home Maintenance
67	Office Manager	Manager of Pricing/Adm.
68	Teacher	Engineer
69	Pre-School Teacher	Accountant
70	Real Estate Broker	Chemical Engineer
71	H.S. Guidance Counselor	N.E. Telephone
72	Librarian	Computer Programmer
73	House maker	Manufacturing Manager
74	Secretary	President HMO
75	Sp. Ed. Administrator	Biochemist
76	Not Employed	Sewer Plant Operator
77	Blank	V.P. of Company
78	Asst. V.P. Bank	Blank
79	Self-employed	Self-employed
80	Homemaker	V.P. Dyecast Plant
81	Teacher's Aide	CPA
82	Payroll Clerk Bank	Commercial Artist
83	Veterinarian's Asst.	Computer Systems Analyst
84	Domestic Management	Retail Management
85	Homemaker	Yard Master P&W Railroad
86	Dir. Nursing Services	Toolmaker
87	Surgical Nurse	Real Estate

Appendix D

College of Choice and Reason for Transfer or
Failure to Attend

College of Choice and Reason for Transferor Failure to Attend

<u>College or University</u>	<u>Reason</u>	<u>F</u>
American University	Financial	3
American University	Other	1
Boston College	Financial	3
Boston University	Financial	4
Boston University*	Financial	1
Brown University	Financial	3
Brown University	Other	2
Duke University	Financial	1
Fordham University	Financial	1
Franklin University	Financial	1
Georgetown University	Financial/Other	1
Grinnell College	Financial	1
Harvard University	Financial	1
Hofstra University	Other	1
College of Holy Cross	Financial	1
Marist College	Financial	1
Mount Holyoke College	Financial	1
Northeastern University*	Financial	1
Northeastern University*	Blank	1
Penn State	Blank	1
Pace University*	Financial	1
Stonehill College	Financial	1
State University of New York	Financial/Other	1
Syracuse University	Other	1
University of Arizona	Financial	1
University of Connecticut	Financial	1
University of Michigan	Financial	1
University of Vermont	Financial	1
University of Wisconsin	Other	1

Note. Asterisks indicate institutions from which subjects transferred.

Appendix E

Career Decision Scale

CAREER DECISION SCALE ITEMS

Adapted and reproduced by special permission of the Publisher, Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc. 16204 North Florida Avenue, Lutz, Florida 33549, from the Career Decision Scale by S. Osipow, C.G. Carney, J. Winer, B. Yancio, M. Koschier, Copyright, 1976. 19867 by Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc.. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission from PAR, INC.

1. I have decided on a career and feel comfortable with it. I also know how to go about implementing my choice.
2. I have decided on a major and feel comfortable with it. I also know how to go about implementing my choice.
3. If I had the skills or the opportunity, I know I would be a _____ but this choice is really not possible for me. I haven't given much consideration to any other alternatives, however.
4. Several careers have equal appeal to me. I'm having a difficult time deciding among them.
5. I know I will have to go to work eventually, but none of the careers I know about appeal to me.
6. I'd like to be a _____, but I'd be going against the wishes of someone who is important to me if I did so. Because of this, it's difficult for me to make a career decision right now. I hope I can find a way to please them and myself.
7. Until now, I haven't given much thought to choosing a career. I feel lost when I think about it because I haven't had many experiences in making decisions on my own and I don't have enough information to make a career decision right now.
8. I feel discouraged because everything about choosing a career seems to "iffy" and uncertain; I feel discouraged, so much so that I'd like to put off making a decision for the time being.
9. I thought I knew what I wanted for a career, but recently I found out that it wouldn't be possible for me to pursue it. Now I've got to start looking for other possible careers.
10. I want to be absolutely certain that my career choice is the "right" one, but none of the careers I know about seem ideal for me.

CAREER DECISION SCALE ITEMS CONTINUED

11. Having to make a career decision bothers me. I'd like to make a decision quickly and get it over with. I wish I could take a test that would tell me what kind of career I should pursue.
12. I know what I'd like to major in, but I don't know what careers it can lead to that would satisfy me.
13. I can't make a career choice right now because I don't know what my abilities are.
14. I don't know what my interests are. A few things "turn me on" but I'm not certain that they are related in any way to my career possibilities.
15. So many things interests me and I know I have the ability to do well regardless of what career I choose. It's hard for me to find just one thing that I would want as a career.
16. I have decided on a career, but I'm not certain how to go about implementing my choice. What do I need to become a _____ anyway?
17. I need more information about what different occupations are like before I can make a career decision.
18. I think I know what to major in, but I feel I need some additional support for it as a choice for myself.
19. None of the above items describe me. The following would describe me better: (write your response below).

Appendix F

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

SELF-DESCRIPTION INVENTORY

1	2	3	4
strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree

The above numbers are designed to reflect your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements. After reading each statement, choose one number from the above group (1-4) which best describes your feelings about the statement. Place the number in the space provided next to the corresponding statement.

- ___ 1. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.
- ___ 2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
- ___ 3. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.
- ___ 4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.
- ___ 5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.
- ___ 6. I take a positive attitude toward myself.
- ___ 7. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
- ___ 8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.
- ___ 9. I certainly feel useless at times.
- ___ 10. At times I think I am no good at all.

Appendix G

Subject Demographic Information Sheet

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SHEET

Please answer the following questions:

1. Please indicate your age in years. _____
2. Please circle your gender. Female Male
3. Please circle. Black (not of Hispanic origin) Asian or Pacific Islander Hispanic
American Indian or Alaskan Native Caucasian (not of Hispanic origin)
4. Of the colleges and universities that you were accepted to, was the University of Rhode Island your first choice? Please circle Yes or No.

In no, please indicate your first choice college/university. _____

Please cite your reason for not attending your first choice college/university. _____

5. Please circle your academic year. Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior other _____
6. Please indicate your college major. _____
7. Please indicate the following: mother's occupation _____
father's occupation _____
8. Please circle your father's highest educational level. Circle your mother's highest educational level.

*less than high school diploma
*high school diploma
*some college education
*Associate's degree
*Bachelor's degree
*Master's degree
*Doctorate

*less than high school diploma
*high school diploma
*some college education
*Associate's degree
*Bachelor's degree
*Master's degree
*Doctorate

*other (specify) _____

*other (specify) _____

9. Have you utilized the Career Services Office at the University of Rhode Island? Please circle Yes or No. If yes, please indicate the type of service(s) utilized. Please circle all that apply.

Individual Career Counseling Career Resources Library SIGI Plus Recruitment Program

Career Workshops (resume writing, interviewing skills, job search strategies) other _____

10. Please indicate whether you are involved in extracurricular activities at the University of Rhode Island. Please Circle Yes or No.

If yes, please list these activities and or indicate college/university organizations in which you are a member. _____

Appendix H

Letter to the Honors Faculty

November 10, 1992

Dear Professor.....

I am a graduate student in the College Student Personnel Program at the University of Rhode Island. My Master's thesis focuses on the career development needs of the University's honors students. All students enrolled in the University's Fall, 1992 honors courses will be targeted for participation in my study. As the instructor of an honors course your cooperation would be greatly appreciated.

Students will be asked to complete a brief research packet. This packet will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Since the honors population at the University of Rhode Island is limited to approximately 120 students, high subject participation is important to the study. In order to secure high levels of participation, I would like to carry out the assessment during scheduled class time the weeks of November 30 and December 7.

Please know that Maury Klein, Director of the Honors Program, has pledged his support to this effort. Career development research, specific to college honors students, is essential to addressing the unique needs of this population.

I shall be getting in touch with you directly in the next week to learn of your decision and to answer further questions that you may have. If you prefer to contact me, I can be reached at 783-0047. My Major Professor, Jerome A. Schaffran is also available to respond to your inquiries at 792-2270.

Thank you for this consideration.

Sincerely,

Denise Anne Godin

Appendix I

Letter of Informed Consent

The University of Rhode Island
Department of Human Development, Counseling and Family Studies
Transition Center

Career decisiveness and self description in college honors students.

CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH

I understand that I have been asked to take part in the research project described below. The researcher has explained the project to me in detail. I have felt free to ask questions. If I have more questions later, Denise Anne Godin, the person mainly responsible for this study, will discuss them with me at 783-0047.

I have been asked to take part in this study which will examine the relationship between variables of self-description and career choice in college honors students.

By agreeing to participate in this study, I will answer 19 questions regarding my status in the career decision-making process, 10 questions regarding my self-description and complete a demographic information sheet. I understand that it will take approximately 15 minutes to complete this research packet.

I understand that my participation in this study will allow the researcher to learn more about the specific career development needs of honors students at the University of Rhode Island.

My part in this study is confidential. None of the information will identify me by name. I understand that all records will be kept by the researcher, and destroyed as soon as the results of the study are calculated.

I understand that if this study causes me any discomfort, I should write or call the University of Rhode Island's Director of Research, 70 Lower College Road, University of Rhode Island, Kingston 02881, telephone (401) 792-2635.

I further understand that the decision whether or not to take part in this study is up to me. I do not have to participate. If I decide to take part in this study, I may quit at any time. Whatever I do will in no way penalize me or effect my status as a student. If I wish to quit, I simply inform Denise Anne Godin (783-0047) of my decision.

If I am not satisfied with the way this study is performed, I may discuss my complaints with Denise Anne Godin, or Dr. Jerome A. Schaffran (792-2270) anonymously, if I choose.

I have read the Consent Form. My questions have been answered.

Appendix J

Follow-up Letter to Honors Faculty

January 30, 1993

Dear Professor:

I wanted to express my appreciation for your support with respect to my research project. Overall, I was able to secure a high level of participation from the honors students, and I am confident that the information that was gathered will be beneficial to addressing the career development needs of future honors students. Thank you once again, and good luck with the spring term.

Sincerely,

Denise Anne Godin

Appendix K

Subjects' Participation in Extracurricular Activity

Subjects Participation in Extracurricular Activity

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Category</u>	<u>F</u>
Delta Zeta Sorority	Greek	1
Phi Sigma Sorority	Greek	1
Sigma Delta Tau Fraternity	Greek	1
Sigma Kappa Sorority	Greek	1
Sigma Pi Fraternity	Greek	1
Unnamed Greek Organizations	Greek	7
Golden Key	Honor Society	6
Kappa Omicron Nu	Honor Society	1
Mortar Board	Honor Society	1
Omicron Delta Epsilon	Honor Society	1
Order of Omega	Honor Society	3
Phi Alpha Theta	Honor Society	2
Phi Eta Sigma	Honor Society	7
Psi Chi	Honor Society	1
Sigma Iota Epsilon	Honor Society	1
American Marketing Assoc.	Pre-Professional	1
Anthropological Society	Pre-Professional	1
Economics Society	Pre-Professional	1
Pre-Law Society	Pre-Professional	5
Basketball	Sport	1
Cross Country	Sport	2
Equestrian Club	Sport	2
Equestrian Team	Sport	2
Flag Football	Sport	1
Gaming Club	Sport	1
Golf Team	Sport	1
Hockey	Sport	3
Outing Club	Sport	2
Project Fitness	Sport	1
Ski Club	Sport	1
Softball	Sport	1
Track & Field	Sport	2
CARE	Club/Activity	1
College Democrats	Club/Activity	2
College, A&S-Advisory Board	Club/Activity	1
Commuter Association	Club/Activity	1
Debate Team	Club/Activity	1
Finance Club	Club/Activity	1
Good 5 Cent Cigar	Club/Activity	2
Great Swamp Gazette	Club/Activity	1

Subjects Participation in Extracurricular Activity

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Category</u>	<u>F</u>
Pacer	Club/Activity	1
People Organizing for Women's Equality and Resilience	Club/Activity	1
Rhode Island Students for Education	Club/Activity	1
Student Advisory Board	Club/Activity	1
Student Entertainment Committee	Club/Activity	1
Students for the Ethical Treatment of Animals	Club/Activity	1
Students for Social Change	Club/Activity	4
Students Organized Against Racism	Club/Activity	3
Student Senate	Club/Activity	1
Uhuru Sa Sa	Club/Activity	1
Union Board	Club/Activity	1
URI Community Ambulance	Club/Activity	2
Voice for Choice	Club/Activity	2
Women's Center Editor	Club/Activity	1
Women Studies Council	Club/Activity	1
Yearbook Photography	Club/Activity	1
Gospel Choir	Religious Affil.	1
Hillel House	Religious Affil.	1
Intervarsity Christian Fellowship	Religious Affil.	1
Family Violence Research	Research	1
Other Research	Research	1
Dorm Council	Residential Life	1
Hall Council	Residential Life	4
Resident Assistant Board of Advisors	Residential Life	1
Resident Assistant	Residential Life	2

Appendix L

Subject Response to Career Decision Scale Open-ended
Question Regarding Self-Description

*Subjects Responses to Career Decision Scale Open-Ended
Question Regarding Self-Description

*Subjects Who Reported Being Decided About College
Major and/or Career

Subject 3: Very few of the items describe me. I know exactly what I want to do and where I want to do it. My only problem is that so many people want to do the same thing. What I worry about is the competition and whether or not I am able to compete with all these people.

Subject 4: I am in a major right now that I will graduate with but will not pursue. I am going back to school somewhere else part-time to try and take courses that would make me prepared for medical school. I am not doing that now because I am being financially supported for college by my parents for 1 1/2 more years- can not switch major and complete the curriculum in so short a time.

Subject 5: I am very decided of what I want to do in the future since high school. For that reason I have had all the information necessary. I am very eager and determined to start med-school and practice medicine.

Subject 7: I have decided on a career in the Navy. I know how to go about it. I feel very secure with that decision.

Subject 37: I know what I want and how to get it.

Subject 39: I know what I want to major in and how to go about implementing my choice. My choice appeals to me and involves many interests. Everyone who is important to me accepts my choice and is very supportive. I have wanted to do this for many years and believe I will do a good job!

***Subjects Who Reported Being Decided About College
Major and/or Career - continued**

Subject 40: I really have a good feeling about the major I've chosen. I know I won't be changing it either.

Subject 41: I feel I am outgoing and I have known what I wanted to do upon graduation since middle school. My parents are very supportive and expose me to the field so that I know how to go about achieving my goals.

Subject 44: I know what I want to do- I'm looking to enter graduate school to continue my studies in History. I've recently changed careers due to an accident which bars me from physically pursuing my old career in the health field. I'm happy I took this honors course to meet needs for an in-depth approach to course material, and for honing my critical analysis, and writing and presentation skills.

Subject 45: I am satisfied that I have found a major which excites, interests, and is available to me. I have not pursued any specific career options in this field because I haven't had time.

Subject 51: I know what I like to do, and have read about my future occupation in magazines and non-fiction books.

Subject 72: Basically, things that interest me make for poor careers. I keep them as hobbies. Pharmacy interests me equally as much as some other fields but it is a growing field and its in demand.

Subject 74: I have confidence in my decisions and know that the best will happen to me. If I work at it (of course).

***Subjects Who Reported Being Decided About College Major and/or Career - continued**

Subject 76: I know my career goals, but I do at times feel uncertain- I believe everyone does.

Subject 77: For the most part, I think I am highly motivated and intense individual that knows exactly what he wants to do in the future. Also, I know I am worthy enough and smart enough to realize that I will succeed in all my endeavors.

Subject 80: I know I want to work in animal behavior, I'm just not sure which aspect of it I want to pursue.

Subject 81: I have decided on a major and a minor at this point in time. I have no idea whether or not it will change. It is something that involves using all the best abilities I possess, and things that interest me. I am very excited about my goals in the working world and will try my best to achieve all of them.

Subject 86: I've chosen a major that I'm satisfied with. by nature of economics, I have a wide breadth of opportunities in jobs and further education after graduation. I am not sure of what I will settle to do, but time will make those decisions clearer. Most of these examples are too anxiety-ridden for me.

***Subjects Who Reported Being Decided About College Major and/or Career but Desired More Information**

Subject 32: I know what I am interested in; however, I would like information as to what my career options are in this field. I would also like an "ability" test to reassure myself that this field would be best for me.

***Subjects Who Reported Being Decided About College Major and/or Career But Desired More Information - continued**

Subject 79: I think I know what I would like to do- study law but, thinking and knowing are too different things. I need to get more information but, I think I'll continue to work toward my goal.

***Subjects Who Reported Being Decided About College Major and/or Career But Cited Multiple Interests**

Subject 6: There is no "one" career path for me. I am a woman who wants to support myself, without a man. I must think of money first, than interest.

Subject 8: I feel that I know what I want to do, although there are several things. I don't want to rush into anything, or land myself in a boring career.

Subject 35: I am fairly certain I would like to pursue a career either with political science or English yet I am afraid I am going to go through years of schooling and not be able to find a job due to the market and state and economy. It is almost making me consider a field like nursing which I detest yet have some knowledge and know I would be able to get a job. But I want to do something I like. So I have the choice of pursuing my dreams or being practical.

Subject 36: I know what I want- to write. But English classes aren't enough. I want to take business classes and science, just to broaden my horizons. Its unfortunate that I have too many requirements to fill, to concentrate in that. There is just not enough time in 4 years to study it all.

Subject 52: I have two different career goals. The first and most important is musician. These questions do not apply to that goal. I had decided on it years ago and have been steadily working towards it. These questions apply to the other choice which so far is school.

Subject 53: I will be applying for Law School and teaching positions both in the US and overseas. Both law school and teaching interest me, but at this time I am not excited about studying law for 3 years. A

teaching position through the State Department is interesting and I am leaning in this direction- why not experience the world while I am young.

***Subjects Who Reported Being Undecided About College Major and/or Career and Cited Multiple Interests**

Subject 1: I have a number of interests and am trying to major or minor in 3 of them and do one as a college summer-time job as well. I figure if I get a job in any one or combo of my interests, I'll be happy.

Subject 23: I have a lot of interests but none of them could lead to a successful career (I think).

Subject 24: I have quite a few ideas in my head of what I might want to do, and I'm sure I could do all of them, but I just don't know which one is right for me.

Subject 33: Several things interest me. I would like to accomplish many things in my lifetime. I am comfortable with my majors, and have a general idea of what they can lead me to, but I need to give more thought to an actual career, as so many things interest me, and my majors are so broad.

Subject 43: I have a general idea of a few careers which would be "right" for me, but I have not made a choice. I am still examining which abilities I need to develop for these different careers, and what are the potential benefits/drawbacks of each individual career.

Subject 42: There are a couple of different but closely related fields I feel the ability and desire to go into, so its just a matter of which would be most readily available.

Subject 22: I change my mind about every month as to what career I want. Money, lifestyle, and pressure are all major considerations. I would love to take a test to tell me what to do so I could start working towards it. I am looking forward to graduating and working very much.

***Subjects Who Reported Being Generally Undecided
About College Major and/or Career**

Subject 63: I'm a graduating liberal arts major, there seem to be no career possibilities, all my friends have the same problem. So how I feel, I have to reevaluate my choice and go back to school or to grad. school to be able to do anything besides be a bank teller- Career guidance is very important-- much more is needed-- especially at early college levels.

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