# RELATIONSHIP OF FAMILY COHESION AND FAMILY ADAPTABILITY TO LOCUS OF CONTROL OF PREADOLESCENTS AND ADOLESCENTS

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Submitted to the faculty of the Graduate College
of the Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
July, 1987

RELATIONSHIP OF FAMILY COHESION AND FAMILY ADAPTABILITY TO LOCUS OF CONTROL OF PREADOLESCENTS AND ADOLESCENTS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

Self-concept or self-esteem has been recognized as a way to identify traits of human behavior (Aboud & Skerry, 1983; Dobson, Campbell & Dobson, 1982). In addition, the different aspects of preadolescents' and adolescents' self-concepts or self-esteem has given rise to a number of measurement devices (Brown & Karnes, 1982; Darakjion & Michael, 1983). However, Marsh, Parker and Smith (1983) suggest that self-concept or self-esteem measures are subjective, vague, and too generalized an indication of human behavior.

Findley and Cooper (1983) state that a more accurate description of human behavior may be made in terms of whether or not the preadolescent or adolescent feels in control of their lives. Andrew and Gregoire (1982) operationally defined this trait in terms of one being in control (internal locus of control) or controlled by forces beyond their control (external locus of control).

Rotter (1966) contended that locus of control was of major significance in understanding the nature of the learning process of individuals. The human being, according to Phares (1957), builds up strength through repeating a response which was rewarded in previous situations. This behavior tends to build internal locus of control through reinforcement (Andrew & Gregoire, 1982).

In addition to locus of control, family dynamics may be a way of understanding the development of pre-adolescents or adolescents (Olson, Sprenkle & Russell, 1979). Olson et al. (1979) saw the family in stages of cohesion (emotional bonding of family members) and adaptability (adjustment of family members to change). Family cohesion and adaptability are relatively new

concepts in understanding family dynamics. Killorin and Olson (1980) described the Circumplex Model in identifying family systems, to diagnose power dynamics, and the roles of family members. Previous studies had focused only on power dynamics such as parental discipline styles (Glenn, 1979). These studies have limited the identification of how families function only to the results of parenting discipline styles. Descriptions of the entire family dynamics of a preadolescent or adolescent was seen in the effects of discipline rather than the continuous ongoing dynamics of the family structure (Wichern & Nowicki, 1976). Styles of parenting were studied for family dynamics and often were concerned with how a parent perceived discipline of a child as in parent permissiveness (Johnson, 1980), restrictiveness (Rebelsky, 1969), and democratic type discipline (Nowicki, 1979). However, the family can be viewed as an integrated family system rather than in terms of parent and adolescent role models and power dynamics (Riskkin & Faunce, 1972).

Nowicki and Strickland (1971) reported there was a need for further research investigating the relationship in regard to parental characteristics and child-rearing practices that lead to the development of internal or external locus of control in children. In relation to locus of control, bonding of a family (family cohesion) and the ability of a family to change its power structure and roles (family adaptability) may play important roles in comparison to the external/internal orientation of preadolescents and adolescents (Druckman, 1979). Several studies have reported on dysfunctional families as opposed to well integrated families (Bell, 1980; Portner, 1980). These authors found that the integrated family had preadolescents and adolescents who were more internally controlled than those families that were disconnected or loosely structured. The preadolescents and adolescents from dysfunctional families reported higher external locus of control than those in the well integrated families. These

comparisons of perceived external locus of control and family cohesion and adaptability may present a more comprehensive approach to understanding preadolescents and adolescents who are in counseling as opposed to those who are not being seen in counseling (Snyder, 1977).

## Statement of the Problem

Research is now being undertaken for the purpose of understanding the preadolescent or adolescent on a broad scope, rather than by the narrow viewpoint of the effects of parental discipline styles, role models, and power dynamics of the family (Nowicki, 1973; Olson, Sprenkle, & Russell, 1979). Preadolescent or adolescent clients and non-clients can be described in terms of their perceived coping skills to resolve problems at home and/or school. Identification of their high or low external locus of control orientation and family cohesion and adaptability may help the family counselor to prepare preadolescent or adolescent clients for the resolvement of their problems.

Research needs to be added which will compare age and client or non-client status to the dynamics of locus of control orientation, and the family dynamics of cohesion and adaptability. Self-perception of locus of control orientation and family dynamics can be an essential ingredient in understanding human behavior patterns in client and non-client preadolescents and adolescents (Nowicki, 1973; Olson, Sprenkle, & Russell, 1979). Therefore, this study is designed to answer the following question: Do client and non-client preadolescents and adolescents differ in self-perception of their own family dynamics of cohesion and adaptability and their level of external locus of control orientation?

## Significance of the Study

There is a gap in the literature in the study of preadolescents' and adolescents' self-perceived locus of control orientation and the family dynamics

of cohesion and adaptability by family counselors and researchers. Previous research of client and non-client preadolescents and adolescents compared self-perceptions of locus of control orientation and actual school achievement without knowledge of the external influences of the ongoing family dynamics of the preadolescent or adolescent. The lower the self-perceived external locus of control, the higher the school achievement (Marsh, Parker, & Smith, 1983). Marsh et al. (1983) stated that if children are not taught the value of control over their environment at an early developmental age, then this could lead to future problems in school achievement. Knowledge of the family dynamics of cohesion and adaptability of children at an early developmental age would be an essential ingredient and an added variable in understanding the impact of locus of control and school achievement. Problems, such as poor self-concept, external rather than internal locus of control, low academic achievement, social and familial maladjustment were also reported by Findley and Cooper (1983) in a study of the preadolescent and adolescent stages of development.

A number of self-evaluating instruments have been widely accepted for use in the developmental understanding of preadolescents' and adolescents' perceived locus of control orientation and family dynamics. Halpin and Ottinger (1983) recognized the importance of locus of control orientation in connection with family dynamics in helping family counselors understand their clients. These self-evaluations became an efficient way to collect and measure the effect of locus of control, such as in academic achievement (Hill & Hill, 1982). Hill and Hill (1982) reported preadolescents and adolescents with lower external locus of control orientation had higher academic achievement.

Locus of control has been compared with other areas of development rather than family dynamics. Markley, Kramer, Parry and Ryabik (1982) found no significance between locus of control and physical attractiveness in

preadolescents and adolescents. No significance was found between locus of control and physical attractiveness during any developmental stage of children (Halpin & Ottinger, 1983). The findings of Markley et al. (1982) and Halpin and Ottinger (1983) suggest that there are limits to how locus of control self-reporting instruments can be compared with other dynamics such as physical appearance.

The literature seems to indicate the need to further research parenting styles and family dynamics in relation to locus of control in preadolescents and adolescents. Nowicki (1979) found a positive correlation between independence training practices of parents and locus of control in the preadolescent and adolescent. The status of the family was also studied in preadolescent boys and their mothers being seen in counseling (Draper, 1983). Draper was concerned with how the boy's absent father (by death or divorce) may have caused a more external helplessness in both the mother and preadolescent. These family dynamics became important to measure for a better understanding of the preadolescent boys that were being seen in counseling.

Parish and Nunn (1983), in studying preadolescent and adolescent girls who had lost a parent, found that the developmental period in which the loss occurred was important. The loss of a parent in a younger developmental age suggests a higher externality and acting out behavior. This information on sense of loss would be important for a family counselor to understand while working with preadolescents and adolescents. In the preadolescents studied by Draper (1983) and Parish and Nunn (1983), there was a relationship between the family dynamics of having an absent parent and an external locus of control orientation.

Kurdek (1980) replicated these studies with preadolescents and adolescents being seen in counseling after a divorce of their parents. The younger the developmental age, the higher the occurrence of externality at the time of the

divorce. This external locus of control in children of divorced parents was found to be significantly higher than the locus of control orientation of most children of the same age who had not experienced a divorce of their parents. Kurdek (1980) pointed out the necessity for family counselors to explore the ability of preadolescents and adolescents to cope with the loss of a parent through divorce. Further studies need to center on cohesion of the family and adaptability to changes in the family structure for preadolescents and adolescents (Olson, Bell, & Portner, 1978). Comparisons can then be made for preadolescents and adolescents in terms of locus of control orientation and family dynamics, rather than the single contributing factor of the loss of a parent by death or divorce.

Strom's (1978) study of families in counseling and families not in counseling, indicated that the interaction between parent and child and the standards set for child behavior are positively correlated to lower external locus of control. In families being seen in counseling centers, Longfellow and Szpiro (1983) presented the concept that supportiveness and availability of the parent was an important factor in preadolescents' and adolescents' perceptions of being internally or externally controlled. The degree of paternal involvement was positively correlated with a child's lower externality (Radin, 1978). These factors of family dynamics are extremely important in order for the family counselor to address disruptive family changes and create positive self-coping skills in preadolescents and adolescents.

Olson, Sprenkle and Russell (1979) related the need for researchers of family counseling to compare preadolescents' and adolescents' family dynamics with their self-reflection of locus of control. Nowicki (1973) also urged family counseling researchers to compare younger and older adolescents in terms of their family dynamics and external locus of control. This present study measures the dynamics of family cohesion and adaptability with locus of control

orientation as reported by preadolescents and adolescents in client and non-client settings.

## Definition of Terms

The following are definitions of terms pertinent to this study.

Adolescents. Adolescents are youth who conceptualize themselves as growing to maturity as an adult (Gottlieb & Ramsey, 1964). The approximate age of this developmental stage is 15 to 18. For purposes of this study, the term adolescents will be equated with those youth attending high school.

Externality. Externality refers to preadolescents and adolescents who do not perceive their actions as having a relationship to their rewards or punishments and are not in control of their environments (Andrew & Gregoire, 1982).

Family Adaptability. Family adaptability refers to the ability of preadolescents and adolescents to change their family system power structure, role relationships, and relationship rules in response to situational stress (Olson, Russell & Sprenkle, 1980). Behaviorally defined, family adaptability refers to those scores of self-perceived family adaptability as reported from the administration of the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales (FACES III), as developed by Olson, Portner and Lavee (1985).

Family Cohesion. Family cohesion refers to the emotional bonding that members such as preadolescents and adolescents have toward one another and the degree of individual autonomy they achieve (Olson, Russell & Sprenkle, 1980). Behaviorally defined, family cohesion refers to those scores of self-perceived family cohesion as reported from the administration of the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales (FACES III), as developed by Olson, Portner and Lavee (1985).

Internality. Internality refers to the beliefs of preadolescents and adolescents that by their own actions, they will be able to determine the reinforcement coming to them and be in control of their environments (Andrew & Gregoire, 1982).

Locus of Control. Locus of control refers to the degree to which the individual perceives that the reward follows from, or is contingent upon, his own behavior or attitude versus the degree to which he feels the reward is controlled by forces outside of himself and may occur independently of his own actions (Rotter, 1966). Behaviorally defined, locus of control refers to those scores of self-perceived external locus of control as reported from the administration of the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale for Children (Nowicki & Strickland, 1973).

Mid-socioeconomic Community. Mid-socioeconomic community refers to a specific suburban community where the median income is $33,000 (Rogers, 1985).

Preadolescents. Preadolescents refers to those youth experiencing the onset of pubescence and the early teenage years. The approximate age of this developmental stage is 12 to 14. For purposes of this study, the term preadolescents will be equated with those enrolled in a mid-high school (Coleman, 1961).

## Limitations

The following limitations are inherent in this study.

1. This study includes preadolescents and adolescents from one mid-socioeconomic suburban community. The results, therefore, may not be generalizable to all preadolescents and adolescents in other communities.

2. The preadolescents and adolescents being seen at community counseling centers are from the same community and the results may not be

generalizable to all preadolescent and adolescent clients being seen in counseling centers in other communities.

## Null Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was tested at the .05 level of significance:

Preadolesents and adolescents from the mid-high and high school population of a mid-socioeconomic community will have no significant differences in their perceived level of external locus of control, family cohesion, and family adaptability than preadolescent and adolescent clients being counseled at counseling centers in the same community.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between family cohesion of client and non-client groups.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between family cohesion of preadolescents and adolescents.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference between family adaptability of client and non-client groups.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference between family adaptability of preadolescents and adolescents.

Hypothesis 5: There is no significant difference between external locus of control of client and non-client groups.

Hypothesis 6: There is no significant difference between external locus of control of preadolescents and adolescents.

## Organization of the Study

This chapter introduced a brief review of studies relative to client and non-client preadolescents' and adolescents' perceptions of their own family dynamics and external locus of control. The statement of the problem, significance of the study, definitions of terms, limitations, and the null hypothesis were stated. Chapter II begins with a review of the literature, while

Chapter III presents the methodology used in conducting this study. Chapter IV includes the statistical analysis, the interpretation, and summary of the results. A summary, conclusion, and recommendations for family counselors are provided in Chapter V.

# CHAPTER II

# REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter contains a review of the related literature pertinent to this study. This chapter reviews the areas of locus of control, family cohesion, and family adaptability. These variables will be reviewed in relation to the developmental age of preadolescents and adolescents, and to client versus non-client populations.

## Developmental Age

### Overview and Definitions

There has been controversy in the literature on the subject of development and defining developmental age levels. While social learning theorists have an idea of development, so do theorists concerned with physical and intellectual kinds of development (Rotter, 1982). For the purposes of this study, the definition of preadolescents and adolescents is those children, according to Gottlieb and Ramsey (1964), who are at the approximate ages of 12 to 14 and 15 to 18, respectively. Further, developmental age levels of preadolescents are determined by grade and maturation of the child who is accepted and enrolled in a middle high school or junior high within their community (Coleman, 1961). Developmental age levels for adolescents are determined by grade and maturation of the child who is accepted and enrolled in a high school within their community (Clark, 1962).

The definition of preadolescent can be drawn from the above references to developmental age, but can be expanded upon through definitions found in other literature. Cohen (1979a) equated the preadolescent as those teenaged years

before high school, or "early adolescence" (p. 5). The tumultous years of pubescence, or preadolescence, was also outlined by Nowicki (1973) in surveying the stress related events during various developmental periods in a study of preadolescent and adolescent years of 60 college students. As the college students looked back at those years, they saw the time of preadolescence or pubescence as a time of shaping or molding their emotional stability to take the pressure of life stress.

Allen (1960) argues that the preadolescent and adolescent should be defined not only in terms of biological and sexual development, but in relation to human social experience. Allen (1960) studied the diversity in social subcultures within the preadolescent and adolescent framework and found that developmental age was more important in terms of social experience than in the actual chronological age of the preadolescent or adolescent. Allen (1960) also stated that adolescence was considered a time of adult character formation, a time of diversity, rather than a time of uniformity. These various subcultures of biological and sexual development provide the preadolescent and adolescent with strategies of adjustment or nonadjustment which will follow into adulthood (Berger, 1961). Sebald (1963) believed that the teenage years subcultural characteristics depended on social status, religion, as well as other real life experiences. Berger (1971) pointed out that the preadolescent and adolescent years are experiential and cannot be fixed by chronological age or by grade level. These years are developmental ages in sequence with a chain of life experiences, a cycle which continues throughout adulthood. The worth of these previous definitions is in how they relate developmental age to that of preadolescents and adolescents in a way where these developmental stages can be observed. The grade level and age of the person now becomes a convenient and somewhat

appropriate way to define preadolescents and adolescents because of the wide disparity of developmental definitions (Musgrove, 1964).

Developmental age must be seen from the eyes of the social learning theorists in order for a clearer understanding of the preadolescent and adolescent. Wallace and Fonte (1984) examined preadolescents and first graders according to Piagetian developmental theory in their understanding of chance and locus of control.

The children in the Wallace and Fonte (1984) study were given a self-perceived test instrument to see if they believed chance played a greater part than their ability to control their environment. While locus of control was not a significant factor in itself, those children who had lower externality understood chance as a non-controlling influence as opposed to their own ability to effect changes on their environment. The children with lower externality perceived that in the future, they would have greater ability to control their own environment. The children with higher externality reported more difficulty in foreseeing their ability to control their own environment.

Most studies in recent literature would agree that preadolescents and adolescents increased their feeling of being in control internally as they developed in age. Externality decreased with age in a study by Maqsud (1980) of 12 to 17 year old males for the subjects became more realistic to the life stress and pressure in their aspiration levels than did higher scoring external adolescents. Mindingal, Libb and Welch (1980) found males and females more external than internal in their study of 51 children just beginning their preadolescent stages of development. This further supports the idea of maturation becoming a significant factor in the self-perceived internality of the preadolescent. However, Prawat, Grissom and Parish (1979) stated that early adolescence does not appear to be an especially turbulent time, affectively.

Their study of school age children and youth grades 3-12, found females to be more internally controlled and higher in achievement motivation than males. However, no indication was shown of dramatic fluctuations in locus of control between preadolescent/adolescent stages in males or females.

Eggland (1973), Hung (1977), and Tyler and Holsinger (1975) found the actual age of the subject to be defined by using grade levels. For example, grade 7 may have a majority of subjects 12 years old with only a few subjects at age 11 or 13. This fluctuation of age of subjects in relation to the median age of 12 would be minimized when using a broad base of grade levels rather than specific age to determine the developmental ages of preadolescents and adolescents.

Markley, Kramer, Parry and Ryabik (1982) replicated the results of a previous study done by Ryckman and Milikiosi (1975). These studies found that external locus of control was significantly different in relationship to the grade level of the subjects. Externality decreased with the progression of subjects through each grade level with the most decrease between middle and high school grade levels.

Small and Schinke (1983), in a study of emotionally disturbed preadolescents, found no fluctuations in the reliability of the developmental age of the preadolescent as a group in their internal/external orientations. However, lower external locus of control increased with the developmental age from preadolescent to the stage of adolescence. Hamburg and Inoff (1982) also noted this lower externality in diabetic children from ages 5 to 19. The lower the age, the higher the externality measured as the subject was more able to control their diabetes as they matured in age and in relationship to their own perceived lower externality. Wolf, Hunter, Webber and Berenson (1981) also found that externality decreased with the progression of age in preadolescents and adolescents.

Studies by Coady, Fellers and Kneavel (1981) found the older the developmental age, the lower the external locus of control. Prawat, Jones and Hampton (1979), in their study of turbulence in adolescents, found differences between early preadolescents and adolescents, but no dramatic change from high external to lower external locus of control with the progression of age.

Family Cohesion and Age

The family dynamic of cohesion (Olson, Portner, & Bell, 1981) describes how members are separated from or fit into their family and the emotional bonding that takes place between each family member. According to the Circumplex Model outlined by Olson, Russell, and Sprenkle (1980), there are seven dimensions of family cohesion. These seven dimensions are emotional bonding, boundaries, coalitions, time space, friends, decision-making, interests and recreation.

Understanding the cohesiveness of the family in relation to the preadolescent and adolescent is extremely helpful in understanding the stages of developmental age and family functioning (Olson, Bell, & Portner, 1978). In the Circumplex Model, there are four levels of family cohesion starting with low or disengaged to high or enmeshed. The two middle levels of cohesion are defined as separated and connected. The Family Adaptability and Cohesion Scales (FACES) was developed by Olson, Bell, and Portner (1978) to measure how each individual of a family perceives their family.

Family cohesion is a useful way to categorize preadolescents and adolescents in their viewpoint of feeling part of the family (connected) or apart from the family (separated). Since families are less rigid to change than in the past (Haley, 1964), the preadolescent and adolescent are being recognized as a valuable part of the family's overall cohesiveness. A preadolescent or adolescent who is more willing to change will provide the family a healthier and stable

family environment (Wertheim, 1975). The balance between feeling part of the family and feeling apart as an individual adds to the stability of the family and an openness of members to cooperate with change. Too much stability may turn into rigidity. A large amount of change could deprive the family of the knowledge of how each member perceives their own value systems.

Olson, Russell, and Sprenkle (1980) recognized the Circumplex Model as a dynamic model which assumes that structural changes will take place in family members. A relatively common area of change is in adolescence. According to Olson, et al. (1980), adolescents frequently want freedom, power, and independence in the family system. If the other family members are less willing to understand and cope with the preadolescent or adolescent, then stress will change the family dynamics to a less integrated family system.

Sandberg (1969) described adolescents from India who perceived their families as enmeshed in terms of family cohesion than adolescents from the United States. In fact, a lack of family cohesiveness to the point of disengagement was perceived by adolescents of the United States. Sandberg (1969) also found adolescents from India reported more joint family activities which were positive while adolescents from the United States sought out more autonomy away from activities of the family.

Rosenblatt and Titus (1976) indicated that teenagers may see family cohesion less desirably than parents. In fact, greater togetherness might be misconstrued by teenagers or adolescents as the parents wanting to control them. Rosenblatt and Titus (1976) further identified differing expectations which may be seen as power struggles with strong emotional arguments over each other's expectations of togetherness and apartness. The preadolescent and adolescent then perceived their family cohesion as rigid and being controlled by their parents (Rosenblatt & Titus, 1976).

Westley and Epstein (1969) found that autonomy in family cohesion was a trait desired by preadolescents and adolescents. Autonomy was described in this study as balanced with a proper amount of parental control and discipline. Adolescents were more likely to have emotional health and stability where families were not dominated by a mother or a father.

Family Adaptability and Age

According to Olson, Russell and Sprenkle (1980), family adaptability is the flexibility of roles within the family and the ability of the family to allow change to take place. The substructures of family adaptability include role relationships, power structure, and the family's ability to respond to situational and developmental stress. Olson, et al. (1980) used the dimensions of family power, the ability of family members to negotiate, family roles and family rules to measure family adaptability.

Four levels of family adaptability were identified from extreme low (rigid) to extreme high (chaotic). The two middle levels are flexible and structured. Healthier families were perceived as more flexible or structured, while families with more problems were rigid or chaotic (Olson, Russell, & Sprenkle, 1980).

Schuaneveldt (1973) and Stein (1978) studied self-perceived ratings by preadolescents and adolescents in relation to family togetherness. When a family had togetherness in activities and decision-making as a higher goal than individual needs, the family was seen to be at the extreme end of the Circumplex Model (rigid), but not necessarily experiencing problems in the family (Olson, Russell, & Sprenkle, 1980). Some rigidity in the family was seen as positive to instill growth and stimulate a balance in the family as the preadolescent or adolescent was able to make mature decisions individually and in their families.

Stein (1978) found preadolescents and adolescents may have goals of more freedom and power in family decision-making (independence). Stein (1978) saw

this independence of the preadolescent and adolescent as a healthy positive reflection of maturity. A balance between rigidity and independence would then yield the inner two combinations of the Circumplex Model of flexible and structured (Olson, Russell, & Sprenkle, 1980).

Balswick and Macrides (1975) and Rollins and Thomas (1975) reviewed the theme of parental discipline as it relates to the family adaptability of preadolescents and adolescents. Families which were placed on the extreme levels (rigid or chaotic) of the Circumplex Model tended to have highly authoritarian or highly permissive parents. Those families depicted as being in the middle levels (flexible or structured) had parents with a more democratic style of parenting.

## Client and Non-Client Groups

### Overview and Definitions

For the purposes of this study, grouping will be defined as those youths who have been studied in comparison with one another and have one or more similar trends or characteristics as commonalities (Gay, 1981). More specifically, this study conceptualizes groups as consisting of preadolescents and adolescents with identified behavioral problems at home or school as opposed to preadolescents and adolescents who have not been identified to that extent (Bell, 1980). Roberts (1971) believed that disadvantages exist between those who have experienced success and those that have not achieved at the same rate. These perceived successes tended to mark groups of children who did not necessarily have behavioral problems but achievement problems (Roberts, 1971). This further supported the assumption that grouping is a convenient way of acknowledging tendencies of a set of subjects such as preadolescents and adolescents. Data was collected on similar and dissimilar characteristics of the

subjects in order to polarize extremes, clarify values, and distinguish ability or achievement.

Locus of Control To Groups

Grouping has been found in the literature as a pre-existing set of conditions in which instruments are used to measure characteristics of groups such as in their self-perceived locus of control (Findley & Cooper, 1983). These pre-existing groups were classified by grade levels or by identified ability and achievement levels (Bladow, 1982; Crandall, Katkovsky & Crandall, 1965). Grouping has been used to study and direct research which describes the perceptions of those preadolescents and adolescents who have been seen in counseling settings (Kurdek, Blisk & Siesky, 1981; Linn & Hodge, 1982). Linn and Hodge (1982) studied hyperactive preadolescent males in comparison to others in their self-perceived locus of control. These hyperactive 8 to 12 years olds had higher externality in their locus of control orientation than the non-hyperactive males studied. Kurdek et al. (1981) compared locus of control and adjustment to divorce of the parents of preadolescents and adolescents. While there were negative feelings about the divorce, there were no significant correlations in locus of control between a group of children with divorced parents and those who had not experienced parental divorce. Hung (1977) suggested a linear relationship between locus of control and adjustment problems in preadolescents. The more external the self-perceived locus of control, the higher the adjustment problems. When working with emotionally disturbed children, Kendall (1978) cautioned researchers to further study groups of children before making generalized assumptions of emotionally disturbed, delinquent, or average elementary public school children. Qualitative differences in factor patterns between well adjusted children and emotionally disturbed children raised

questions about interpreting the results of locus of control scores alone without the use of other interpretive measures.

Family Cohesion to Groups

Minuchin, Montalvo, Guerney, Rossman, and Schumen (1967) compared ten poverty level families with delinquent children and 10 families without a delinquent child. The families with delinquent children were found to be at the extreme ends of cohesion, while families without a delinquent child had middle or a greater amount of cohesiveness as a family.

Angell (1936) wrote, ". . . family integration was the bond of coherence and unity running through family life" (p. 15). Studies by McCubbin, Boss, Wilson, and Lester (1979) and McCubbin and Lester (1977) focused on the coping behaviors and coping patterns that families use in times of stress. These studies found a need for a balance between both individual family members' growth (autonomy) and family unity and integration.

Family Adaptability to Groups

Adaptability of family dynamics has been studied by sociologists and counseling professionals (Sprenkle & Olson, 1978). Family adaptability variables include power, discipline techniques, roles and rules of the family. Sprenkle and Olson (1978) applied an interaction game with a group of couples seeking marriage counseling with a control group of couples not in counseling. Sprenkle and Olson (1978) found that adaptability and marital harmony were closely linked to one another for both groups. The counseling group was more extreme in their perception of family adaptability. When higher levels of stress were applied to both groups, the families who were in counseling had higher stress levels and extreme levels of adaptability than those not in counseling.

Goldstein and Kling (1975) used the words "family solidarity" (p. 6) rather than family adaptability for the variables of power, discipline, and roles of the

family. Bell (1980) and Jackson and Weakland (1961) in their studies of client and non-client families, used the words "family flexibility" (p. 155) in place of family adaptability. Non-client families were seen to be more flexible than distressed families and there was more rigidity of interaction in the client family. Another study in understanding family adaptability in client and non-client families was conducted by Van der Veen (1976). This study of 50 families hypothesized and found that client families had lower family adaptive coping skills and lower integration than non-client families.

## Summary

It has been shown through the literature that the use of grade levels of middle school and high school becomes a distinguishable way to form groups of children from the ages of 10 to 18. This categorization by grades, for the purposes of this study, was to determine those children who fell into the developmental age of either being preadolescents or adolescents. Grade level by middle school and high school becomes a convenient form to examine the development of preadolescents and adolescents.

Olson, Portner, and Lavee (1985) have developed a system for preadolescents and adolescents to rate their own families ability or inability to change and cope with problems. Olson, Russell, and Sprenkle (1980) reported that there may be disagreement in what a family sees as goals as far as family togetherness as opposed to the independence of the individual. Olson, et al. (1980) viewed this displayed independence as either a healthy display of maturation or seen as rebellion by other family members. Family cohesion and family adaptability then become important ingredients in understanding the developmental age of the preadolescent and adolescent (Olson, Russell & Sprenkle, 1980).

The two groups used in this study were preadolescents and adolescents in counseling and those that were not being seen in counseling. This use of grouping acts as a convenient method of aligning those preadolescents and adolescents with similar identified characteristics.

Trends in the literature have included research into locus of control by groups of client and non-client preadolescents and adolescents. Identification of groups may come through previous identification by ability, achievement, or by grade levels. Most studies reviewed examine locus of control with other variables for preadolescents and adolescents from client and non-client settings. Generally, the client populations evidenced higher external locus of control as a group than those not seen in counseling settings. This finding may be taken with caution (Kendall, 1978), as some non-client populations may exhibit higher externality than identified client populations. Generalized assumptions are to be limited to previous studies in order to confirm or deny specific links in the grouping of client to non-client populations.

When family dynamics were studied, grouping was used for families in counseling settings and for those that were not in counseling. The Circumplex Model by Olson, Russell, and Sprenkle (1980) supported previous reviewed research and added an expanded means of identifying family cohesion and adaptability. Studies have been consistent in their approach to the existence of distinguishable group characteristics of the family. The concepts of family cohesion and family adaptability were identifed by different studies in client families as well as non-client families. Most studies agreed that a necessary balance must exist between the growth of the individual and the integration and unity of the family. Families need to learn how to be adaptable to change. Families in counseling, or with preadolescents and adolescents in counseling, were seen as needing adaptable flexibility in times of stress (Bell, 1980).

Overall, groups of families of preadolescents and adolescents in counseling have more external locus of control than those groups not being seen in counseling settings. Also, there are lower levels of family cohesion and adaptability in families with preadolescents and adolescents in counseling than those groups of children not in counseling.

# CHAPTER III

# METHODOLOGY

Included in this chapter is a discussion of the subjects for this study and the process used for their selection. The research design is described, followed by a discussion on the statistical design of this study.

## Subjects

The sample for this study was randomly selected preadolescents and adolescents from a mid-socioeconomic community where the median income was $33,000 (Rogers, 1985). The preadolescents (ages 12 to 14) and adolescents (ages 15 to 18) were randomly selected from the mid-high and high school and from a client list from the community's counseling centers. Clients from the counseling centers were taken off the school list. The preadolescent and adolescent clients have received counseling for exhibiting behaviorial problems at school and/or at home.

Preadolescents and adolescents of this community were mostly Caucasion with approximately 2,300 enrolled in the middle high school and high school. Subjects were randomly selected from a list of students until 68 subjects were selected for each of the four groups. Subjects were placed in the groups based on being classified as preadolescent or adolescent, client from a counseling center or a non-client. The community counseling centers had approximately 300 preadolescents and 300 adolescents being counseled over a one-year time period. The subjects were randomly selected from a list of all students enrolled in the school system until 68 subjects were selected for each non-client group. Clients from the community counseling centers were randomly selected from a

list of all preadolescent and adolescent clients until 68 subjects were selected for each client group. A group size of at least 64 subjects per cell was recommended for studies in the behavioral sciences (Cohen, 1979) (Table 1.)

Table 1

The Four Groups in the Sample Randomly Selected for this Study

| Group | | Subjects | Tests |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1, n = 68 | R | Pre-adolescent clients from Community Counseling Centers | NSLOC-C FACES III |
| 2, n = 68 | R | Pre-adolescents from a Middle School | NSLOC-C FACES III |
| 3, n = 68 | R | Adolescent clients from Community Counseling Centers | NSLOC-C FACES III |
| 4, n = 68 | R | Adolescents from a High School | NSLOC-C FACES III |

## Instrumentation

### Locus of Control

The Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale for Children (NSLOC-C) (Nowicki & Strickland, 1973) was used as the instrument to measure preadolescents' and adolescents' external locus of control. The Nowicki-Strickland scale is not copyrighted, but may be reprinted and used upon permission of the authors (Nowicki & Strickland, 1973). The Nowicki-Strickland

scale is a 40 question paper and pencil measure which is marked by either placing yes or no next to each question. The test was administered individually to the clients and in groups at the schools. The number of answers marked yes was the level of external locus of control perceived by the subject. The higher the score, the more external the orientation. A total of 40 minutes was allowed to complete the test. Standardized conditions are used for administration of the Nowicki-Strickland scales.

The Nowicki-Strickland scale was constructed on the basis of Rotter's definition of the internal-external control of reinforcement dimension (Rotter, 1966). The items describe reinforcement situations across interpersonal and motivational areas such as affiliation, achievement, and dependency (Nowicki & Strickland, 1973). Teachers helped to initially construct the items with a goal of fifth-grade readability. Nowicki and Strickland (1973) asked a panel of judges and a group of clinical psychology staff members to secure complete agreement on each item used in the final 40 item scale. The suggested grade level use for the Nowicki-Strickland Scale is third through twelfth grades (Duke & Lewis, 1979; Duke & Nowicki, 1973; Nowicki, 1971; Nowicki & Duke, 1974). (See Appendix A for a copy of the test items.)

The Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale for Children has been divided and items identified for a secondary school group consisting of subjects from the seventh through twelfth grades. These revised scales consist of items which have to do with the individual's perception of control over oneself (self-control) rather than over other's lives (social-control). According to Nowicki and Strickland (1971), there is clear evidence of a belief that lower externality is a correlate of school achievement, social attraction, and the ability to delay gratification. Nowicki and Strickland (1973) assumed that lower externality was related to competence in school and social maturity.

Reliability. Test-retest reliabilities for the Nowicki-Strickland scale (Nowicki & Strickland, 1973) sampled at two grade levels, six weeks apart were .66 for the seventh grade with 117 subjects, and .71 for the tenth grade with 125 subjects. Estimates of internal consistency (split-half method), corrected by the Spearman-Brown formula, were calculated at r = .68 for grades 6-8 with 68 subjects in each grade; r = .74 for grades 9-11 with 100 subjects in each grade; and r =.81 for grade 12 with 87 subjects (Nowicki & Strickland, 1973).

Validity. Evidence of construct validity has been shown (Nowicki, 1971; Nowicki & Roundtree, 1971; Nowicki & Strickland, 1973). Logical construct validity also was validated by using comments from teachers and pupils involved in the sample which led to the present form of the Nowicki-Strickland Scale (Nowicki & Strickland, 1973). Through factor analysis and cross-validation, the Nowicki-Strickland Scale was compared with two similar samples of high school students (Walters & Klein, 1980). Two overall factors of self-control and social-control were identified within the locus of control context.

A review of the literature in validation studies using the Nowicki-Strickland Scale have shown positive correlations in comparing locus of control with other areas of concern in the development of children, such as lower externality and positive social behavior (Small & Schinke, 1983); perceptual and motor skills (Gordon & Tegtmeyer, 1983); and the developmental process according to Piaget (Wallace & Fonte, 1984). Also, lower externality on both black and caucasian elementary and high school students was found to be related significantly to high achievement (Roberts, 1971), and higher socioeconomic position and popularity in both black and caucasian children (Nowicki & Roundtree, 1971).

Family Adaptability and Family Cohesion

The second measure, Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales

(FACES III), was developed by Olson, Portner and Lavee (1985). FACES III was developed to evaluate family cohesion and family adaptability as found in the Circumplex Model (Olson, Russell & Sprenkle, 1979). FACES III measures perceived family functioning and can be administered to children from 12 through adulthood. This self-report instrument can be given individually to family members and be compared and contrasted using the Circumplex Model. Discrepancies of perception can be identified and remediation and improvement of areas of family dynamics can then take place through family counseling.

FACES III is a 20-item self-report instrument using a Likert-type scoring system (1=Almost Never, 2=Once In A While, 3=Sometimes, 4=Frequently, 5=Almost Always). The subject completes the questions individually in terms of his or her own perceptions of family satisfaction with the present family system. The average time of completion is 10 to 20 minutes for persons with a seventh-grade reading level, ages 12 or above. FACES III can be administered individually or within a group. There are 10 items for the Cohesion score (sum of all odd items) and 10 items for the Adaptability score (sum of all even items). (See Appendix B for a copy of the test items.)

Answers are scored on a continuous scale from a low Cohesion (Disengaged) and low Adaptability (Rigid) to high Cohesion (Enmeshed) and high Adaptability (Chaotic). Middle scores of central tendency are considered to be indicative of individuals perceiving their families as more balanced and well-adjusted.

Reliability. Olson et al. (1985) established reliability by using Cronbach Alpha for cohesion and adaptability for a sample of 2,412 respondents to the 20-item FACES III. The sample was divided into two equal sub-groups of "non-problem" families (p. 30). Internal consistency was measured and found adequate in the two subscales with cohesion $r = .77$ and adaptability $r = .62$. The

test-retest correlations were .84 for the entire scale, .83 for cohesion, and .80 for adaptability.

Validity. Construct validity for FACES III was obtained through factor analysis separately for the Cohesion and Adaptability items. The factor analysis indicated two independent and orthogonal dimensions with a Pearson product correlation between the two scales of r = .03. Construct validity was further established with high correlations for the items of each scale and with the combined total scales.

## Procedure

Preadolescents (68) and adolescents (68) referred for counseling at three community counseling centers were randomly selected from all counseling clients over a one-year period and given the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale and FACES III. The same number of preadolescents (68) and adolescents (68) were randomly selected from the mid-high and high school populations of a mid-socioeconomic suburban school system. The schools and the counseling centers were located within the same community.

The subjects were administered the two test instruments with a maximum total test time of 60 minutes. The subjects being seen in counseling centers were administered the tests as part of the first intake session with their assigned family counselors. The subjects from the schools were given the tests in groups of 34 students at a time because of limited room size. A vacant classroom at the schools was selected and the tests were administered during the morning hours of two days. Subjects from both groups were informed that their answers were to be held confidential during and after the research was completed. Students selected were volunteers and were not coerced nor pressured to take the tests. An Informed Consent Form was distributed to each selected subject

and permission was received in writing from parents before testing. (See Appendix C for a copy of the Informed Consent Form and an explanation of the tests.)

## Research Design

A causal-comparative design was chosen as a way of establishing the differences in comparing groups of client and non-client preadolescents and adolescents. There may be a lack of control of the independent variables which may create a weakness in the ability to determine cause and effect. However, attempts were made to eliminate extraneous variables through subject selection (Isaac & Michael, 1983). (See Table 2.)

## Statistical Analysis

A two-way between subjects multivariate analysis of variance was to be conducted on students' and clients' perceived locus of control scores, family cohesion, and family adaptability scores. However, upon examination of the error correlation matrix of the dependent variables, it was determined that a construct was not formed. Therefore, a one-way analysis of variance was used to analyze each of the three dependent variables. The fixed categorical independent variables were group (1=clients from counseling centers, 2=students from mid-high and high schools) and developmental age (1=preadolescent, 2=adolescent). The random continuous dependent variables were the construct of perception of self as measured by locus of control scores (Nowicki & Strickland, 1973) and family cohesion and family adaptability scores (Olson, Portner & Lavee, 1985). Omega squared was the strength of association test performed on all significant results.

Table 2

Research Design of the Four Client and Non-client Groups of Preadolescents and Adolescents for Locus of Control, Family Cohesion, and Family Adaptability

| Groups | R | Ind. Var. #1 (Age) | Ind. Var. #2 (Counseling Status) | Dep. Var. #1 (Locus of Control) | Dep. Var. #2 (Family Cohesion) | Dep. Var. #3 (Family Adaptability) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I | R | $(X_1)$ | $(X_3)$ | $O_{LOC}$ | $O_{Coh}$ | $O_{Adpt}$ |
| II | R | $(X_2)$ | $(X_3)$ | $O_{LOC}$ | $O_{Coh}$ | $O_{Adpt}$ |
| III | R | $(X_1)$ | $(X_4)$ | $O_{LOC}$ | $O_{Coh}$ | $O_{Adpt}$ |
| IV | R | $(X_2)$ | $(X_4)$ | $O_{LOC}$ | $O_{Coh}$ | $O_{Adpt}$ |

Symbols:

(X) independent variables: ( ) indicates no manipulation
(O) dependent variable

$X_1$ Preadolescents
$X_2$ Adolescents
$X_3$ Clients
$X_4$ Non-Clients

$O_{LOC}$ Locus of Control Scale
$O_{Coh}$ Family Cohesion Scale
$O_{Adpt}$ Family Adaptability Scale

# CHAPTER IV

## RESULTS

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

An examination of the error correlation matrix of the dependent variables as reported in Table 3 indicates that there were not enough correlation coefficients of large enough size ($\geq .35$) to have formed a construct, therefore, an analysis of variance was performed using each of the three dependent variables, Locus of Control, Family Cohesion, and Family Adaptability.

Table 3

Within Cells Error Correlation Matrix for

Locus of Control, Cohesion, and Adaptability

| | Locus of Control | Cohesion | Adaptability |
|---|---|---|---|
| Locus of Control | 3.64 | -- | -- |
| Cohesion | -.21 | 8.27 | -- |
| Adaptability | -.13 | .20 | 5.91 |

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between family cohesion of client and non-client groups.

A one-way analysis of variance was used to analyze the data where the independent variable was group (client, non-client) and the dependent variable was family cohesion. An examination of the summary table reported in Table 4 indicates a statistically significant ($p < .05$) f ratio; thus, Hypothesis 1 was rejected. An examination of the means reported in Table 5 shows that non-client groups have a higher degree of family cohesion ($\bar{X}$=33.07) than client groups ($\bar{X}$=30.71). The strength of association as indexed by omega squared indicated that 2% of the variance in family cohesion was accounted for by groups.

Table 4

Summary Table of Analysis

of Variance of Family Cohesion

| Source | SS | df | MS | f |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 376.47 | 1 | 376.47 | 5.4* |
| Between Ages | 348.76 | 1 | 348.76 | 5.02* |
| Within | 18606.26 | 268 | 69.43 | -- |
| Total | 19331.49 | 270 | -- | -- |

*$p < .05$

Table 5

Means and Standard Deviations of Locus of Control, Family Cohesion, and Family Adaptability of Client and Non-client Groups[a]

| Variable | Client[b] Groups | Non-client[c] Groups |
|---|---|---|
| Locus of Control | 20.35[j] | 20.15 |
| | (3.70) | (3.90) |
| Cohesion | 30.71 | 33.07 |
| | (8.37) | (8.43) |
| Adaptability | 23.42 | 25.38 |
| | (6.18) | (6.47) |

[a] $N_t$ = 272

[b] $n_1$ = 68 Preadolescents, 68 Adolescents

[c] $n_2$ = 68 Preadolescents, 68 Adolescents

j = Top value reports the mean; bottom value reports the standard deviation.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between family cohesion of preadolescents and adolescents.

A one-way analysis of variance was used to analyze the data where the independent variable was age (preadolescent, adolescent) and the dependent variable was family cohesion. An examination of the summary table reported in Table 4 indicates a statistically significant ($p < .05$) f ratio; thus, Hypothesis 2

was rejected. An examination of the means reported in Table 6 shows that preadolescents have a higher degree of family cohesion ($\bar{X}$=33.02) than adolescents ($\bar{X}$=30.76). The strength of association as indexed by omega squared indicated that 1% of the variance in family cohesion was accounted for by age.

Table 6

Means and Standard Deviations of Locus of Control, Family Cohesion, and Family Adaptability of Preadolescents and Adolescents[a]

| Variable | Preadolescents[b] | Adolescents[c] |
|---|---|---|
| Locus of Control | 20.44[j] | 20.06 |
| | (3.61) | (3.95) |
| Cohesion | 33.02 | 30.76 |
| | (8.57) | (8.23) |
| Adaptability | 24.78 | 24.02 |
| | (6.16) | (6.62) |

[a] $N_t$ = 272

[b] $n_1$ = 68 Clients, 68 Non-clients

[c] $n_2$ = 68 Clients, 68 Non-clients

j = Top value reports the mean; bottom value reports the standard deviation.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference between family adaptability of client and non-client groups.

A one-way analysis of variance was used to analyze the data where the independent variable was group (client, non-client) and the dependent variable was family adaptability. An examination of the summary table reported in Table 7 indicates a statistically significant ($p < .05$) f ratio; thus, Hypothesis 3 was rejected. An examination of the means reported in Table 5 shows that non-client groups have a higher degree of family adaptability ($\bar{X}$=25.38) than client groups ($\bar{X}$=23.42). The strength of association as indexed by omega squared indicated that 1% of the variance in family adaptability was accounted for by groups.

Table 7

Summary Table of Analysis of Variance of Family Adaptability

| Source | SS | df | MS | f |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 262.09 | 1 | 262.09 | 6.59* |
| Within Groups | 10653.78 | 268 | 39.75 | -- |
| Total | 10915.87 | 269 | -- | -- |

*$p < .05$

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference between family adaptability of preadolescents and adolescents.

A one-way analysis of variance was used to analyze the data where the independent variable was age (preadolescent, adolescent) and the dependent variable was family adaptability. An examination of the results indicates no significant ($p > .05$) difference between preadolescents and adolescents; thus, Hypothesis 4 failed to be rejected.

Hypothesis 5: There is no significant difference between external locus of control of client and non-client groups.

A one-way analysis of variance was used to analyze the data where the independent variable was group (client, non-client) and the dependent variable was external locus of control. An examination of the results indicates no significant ($p > .05$) difference between client and non-client groups; thus, Hypothesis 5 failed to be rejected.

Hypothesis 6: There is no significant difference between external locus of control of preadolescents and adolescents.

A one-way analysis of variance was used to analyze the data where the independent variable was age (preadolescent, adolescent) and the dependent variable was external locus of control. An examination of the results indicates no significant ($p > .05$) difference between preadolescents and adolescents; thus, Hypothesis 6 failed to be rejected.

## Summary

The results of this study were presented in this chapter which included the statistical analyses as well as the interpretation of the data collected. A one-way analysis of variance was performed on each of the three dependent variables since a multivariate analysis for this study was not appropriate as was indicated by the small within cells error correlation matrix. The analyses of

variance resulted in rejection of null hypotheses 1, 2, and 3, and in failure to reject null hypotheses 4, 5, and 6. Based on the results, non-client groups had higher family cohesion and family adaptability than client groups. Preadolescents also had a higher degree of family cohesion than adolescents. Further, there was no significant difference between age and family adaptability. No significant difference was found between external locus of control and age or group. Results of the omega squared strength of association between family cohesion and groups were (.02), for family cohesion and age (.01), and (.02) for family adaptability and groups.

# CHAPTER V

# SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine ways in which client and non-client preadolescents and adolescents differ in external locus of control and family dynamics. This study involved four groups of 68 preadolescents from a mid-high school, 68 adolescents from a high school, and 68 preadolescents and 68 adolescents being counseled at one of three community counseling centers. Participation was voluntary and the four groups were randomly selected to take the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales (FACES III) (Olson, Portner, & Lavee, 1985) and the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale for Children (Nowicki & Strickland, 1973).

The two groups were compared on perceived external locus of control and two measures of family dynamics, family cohesion and family adaptability. Limitations of this study were: (a) This study included preadolescents and adolescents from one mid-socioeconomic suburban community; therefore, the results are not generalizable to all preadolescents and adolescents in other communities, and (b) the preadolescents and adolescents being seen at community counseling centers are from the same community and results are not generalizable to all preadolescent and adolescent clients being seen at counseling centers in other communties.

The six hypotheses generated for this study were as follows.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between family cohesion of client and non-client groups.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between family cohesion of preadolescents and adolescents.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference between family adaptability of client and non-client groups.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference between family adaptability of preadolescents and adolescents.

Hypothesis 5: There is no significant difference between external locus of control of client and non-client groups.

Hypothesis 6: There is no significant difference between external locus of control of preadolescents and adolescents.

Analysis of variance with an alpha level of .05 was used for the statistical analysis of the data. Statistically significant differences were found for three of the six hypotheses. The preadolescent and adolescent client groups were found to have a significantly lower level of family cohesion and family adaptability than the non-client preadolescents and adolescents. No statistically significant differences were found for the four groups in terms of external locus of control. Both client and non-client preadolescents had a significantly lower level of family cohesion than both client and non-client adolescents. Based on the omega squared results, the strength of association between client and non-client groups and the dependent variables were .02 for family cohesion and .02 for family adaptability. Further, the strength of association between the preadolescents and adolescents and the dependent variable were .01 for family cohesion.

## Conclusions

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

1. When locus of control and the family dynamics of cohesion and adaptability were compared, no significant difference was found in the interaction of these three independent variables to the dependent variables of

client and non-client groups and the developmental age of preadolescents and adolescents. Thus, the results of this study suggest that family counselors need to continue finding new methods in describing the coping skills of preadolescents and adolescents experiencing behavioral problems at home or at school. Family counselors, therefore, working with preadolescents and adolescents may need to offer programs and services designed to strengthen a sense of self-control and enhance family dynamics. These programs could also be helpful in preparing preadolescents and adolescents in coping with stressful life situations in the future.

2. The results of this study offer comfirmation to support findings by Van der Veen (1976) that client groups have lower family adaptability and coping skills than non-client groups. Further, this study provides support to the findings of Olson, Russell, and Sprenkle (1980) who found that adolescents have a lower level of family cohesion than preadolescents. This study also supports Rosenblatt and Titus (1976) who suggested that adolescents have a lower level of family cohesion than preadolescents because they see this dynamic as rigid and as being controlled by their parents. Therefore, family counselors may need to help preadolescents and adolescents to adjust to changes in the family structure of their own particular family (i.e., divorce, death of a family member, moving). There also are implications for family counselors to prepare preadolescents and adolescents in cooperating with existing school, social, and parental guidelines.

3. Client and non-client groups were tested in only one mid-socioeconomic community. In examining the results of the omega squared strength of association tests, there was a relatively weak relationship between client and non-client groups and the dependent variables of family cohesion (.02) and (.02) for family adaptability. Since the study by Minuchin, Montalvo, Guerney, Rossman, and Schumen (1967) compared only delinquent youths and

their families in counseling to poverty level youths and their families, more general comparative studies of all socioeconomic levels of preadolescents and adolescents may add to the strength of association between groups and family dynamics. Comparisons could be made of youth experiencing behavioral problems at school or at home and youth from all socioeconomic levels with client and non-client groups from urban, rural, suburban, or remote locations would provide a broader base of information about their family dynamics, which may add to the strength of association between groups and family dynamics.

4. In examining the results of the omega squared strength of association tests, there was a relatively weak relationship between preadolescents and adolescents and the dependent variable of family cohesion (.01). Researchers and family counselors may need to compare preadolescents' and adolescents' perceptions of their family cohesion in terms of distanced age brackets, such as lower middle school age for preadolescents (ages 10 to 13) and upper middle to high school adolescents (ages 15 to 18).

## Recommendations

Although no significant difference was found between client and non-client preadolescents and adolescents on external locus of control, the results of this study have shown that client and non-client preadolescents and adolescents had a significantly lower level of family cohesion and family adaptability. Furthermore, both client and non-client preadolescents had a significantly lower level of family cohesion than both client and non-client adolescents. Based on the findings, the following recommendations for future research are made.

1. The sample could be broadened to include not only preadolescents and adolescents from one mid-socioeconomic community, but also to other communities with various median income levels in order to increase the generalizability of the findings to larger groups.

2. The sample could be broadened to include not only client and non-client preadolescents and adolescents from community counseling centers within the same community, but also from other community counseling centers in other communities in order to increase the generalizability of the findings to larger groups.

3. Research could be conducted to determine if there are other ways besides locus of control and family cohesion and family adaptability in which client and non-client preadolescents and adolescents differ (i.e., self-esteem, family roles, sociocultural activities).

4. Longitudinal research could be conducted to determine how family counselors may design new counseling strategies and programs to improve family cohesion and family adaptability of preadolescents and adolescents being seen in counseling.

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# APPENDIXES

# APPENDIX A

# THE NOWICKI-STRICKLAND LOCUS OF CONTROL SCALE

## APPENDIX A

## THE NOWICKI-STRICKLAND

## LOCUS OF CONTROL SCALE

The Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control scale is a paper and pencil measure consisting of 40 questions which are answered either yes or no by placing a mark next to the question.

| Yes | No | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| _____ | _____ | 1. | Do you believe that most problems will solve themselves if you just don't fool with them? |
| _____ | _____ | 2. | Do you believe that you can stop yourself from catching a cold? |
| _____ | _____ | 3. | Are some kids just born lucky? |
| _____ | _____ | 4. | Most of the time do you feel that getting good grades means a great deal to you? |
| _____ | _____ | 5. | Are you often blamed for things that just aren't your fault? |
| _____ | _____ | 6. | Do you believe that if somebody studies hard enough he or she can pass any subject? |
| _____ | _____ | 7. | Do you feel that most of the time it doesn't pay to try hard because things never turn out right anyway? |
| _____ | _____ | 8. | Do you feel that if things start out well in the morning that it's going to be a good day no matter what you do? |
| _____ | _____ | 9. | Do you feel that most of the time parents listen to what their children have to say? |
| _____ | _____ | 10. | Do you believe that wishing can make good things happen? |
| _____ | _____ | 11. | When you get punished does it usually seem it's for no good reason at all? |
| _____ | _____ | 12. | Most of the time do you find it hard to change a friend's (mind) opinion? |
| _____ | _____ | 13. | Do you think that cheering more than luck helps a team to win? |
| _____ | _____ | 14. | Do you feel that it's nearly impossible to change your parent's mind about anything? |
| _____ | _____ | 15. | Do you believe that your parents should allow you to make most of your own decisions? |
| _____ | _____ | 16. | Do you feel that when you do something wrong there's very little you can do to make it right? |
| _____ | _____ | 17. | Do you believe that most kids are just born good at sports? |
| _____ | _____ | 18. | Are most of the other kids your age stronger than you are? |
| _____ | _____ | 19. | Do you feel that one of the best ways to handle most problems is just not to think about them? |
| _____ | _____ | 20. | Do you feel that you have a lot of choice deciding who your friends are? |

| Yes | No | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| _____ | _____ | 21. | If you find a four-leaf clover do you believe that it might bring you good luck? |
| _____ | _____ | 22. | Do you often feel that whether you do your homework has much to do with what kinds of grades you get? |
| _____ | _____ | 23. | Do you feel that when a kid your age decides to hit you, there's little you can do to stop him or her? |
| _____ | _____ | 24. | Have you ever had a good luck charm? |
| _____ | _____ | 25. | Do you believe that whether or not people like you depends on how you act? |
| _____ | _____ | 26. | Will your parents usually help you if you ask them to? |
| _____ | _____ | 27. | Have you felt that when people were mean to you it was usually for no reason at all? |
| _____ | _____ | 28. | Most of the time, do you feel that you can change what might happen tomorrow by what you do today? |
| _____ | _____ | 29. | Do you believe that when bad things are going to happen they just are going to happen no matter what you try to do to stop them? |
| _____ | _____ | 30. | Do you think that kids can get their own way if they just keep trying? |
| _____ | _____ | 31. | Most of the time do you find it useless to try to get your own way at home? |
| _____ | _____ | 32. | Do you feel that when good things happen they happen because of hard work? |
| _____ | _____ | 33. | Do you feel that when somebody your age wants to be your enemy there's little you can do to change matters? |
| _____ | _____ | 34. | Do you feel that it's easy to get friends to do what you want them to? |
| _____ | _____ | 35. | Do you usually feel that you have little to say about what you get to eat at home? |
| _____ | _____ | 36. | Do you feel that when someone doesn't like you there's little you can do about it? |
| _____ | _____ | 37. | Do you usually feel that it's almost useless to try in school because most other children are just plain smarter than you are? |
| _____ | _____ | 38. | Are you the kind of person who believes that planning ahead makes things turn out better? |
| _____ | _____ | 39. | Most of the time, do you feel that you have little to say about what your family decides to do? |
| _____ | _____ | 40. | Do you think it's better to be smart than to be lucky? |

# APPENDIX B

# FACES III

APPENDIX B

FACES III

David H. Olson, Joyce Portner, and Yoav Lavee

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Almost Never | Once in a While | Sometimes | Frequently | Almost Always |

DESCRIBE YOUR FAMILY NOW:

_____ 1. Family members ask each other for help.

_____ 2. In solving problems, the children's suggestions are followed.

_____ 3. We approve of each other's friends.

_____ 4. Children have a say in their discipline.

_____ 5. We like to do things with just our immediate family.

_____ 6. Different persons act as leaders in our family.

_____ 7. Family members feel closer to other family members than to people outside the family.

_____ 8. Our family changes its way of handling tasks.

_____ 9. Family members like to spend free time with each other.

_____ 10. Parent(s) and children discuss punishment together.

_____ 11. Family members feel very close to each other.

_____ 12. The children make the decisions in our family.

_____ 13. When our family gets together for activities, everybody is present.

_____ 14. Rules change in our family.

_____ 15. We can easily think of things to do together as a family.

_____ 16. We shift household responsibilities from person to person.

_____ 17. Family members consult other family members on their decisions.

_____ 18. It is hard to identify the leader(s) in our family.

_____ 19. Family togetherness is very important.

_____ 20. It is hard to tell who does which household chores.

# APPENDIX C

# INFORMED CONSENT FORM

## APPENDIX C

## INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

_____ is working with Oklahoma State University in conducting research in the area of youth and family counseling services. Your assistance, through participation in this project, is appreciated. This request is voluntary and will in no way affect your ability to receive services from _____. If you choose to participate, all names and other personal information will be kept fully confidential under the protection of this agency and Oklahoma State University. Only the test score will be utilized. We appreciate your attention to this matter. If you wish to participate, please sign the below portion of this form. (An explanation of the research measures to be given is attached to this consent form. If you have any questions, please call this office at _____.)

### Research Consent to Participant

I/We _____ parent(s) of _____ hereby consent to allow my/our child's test information to be used as part of the research being conducted at Oklahoma State University. I understand that my/our consent is voluntary and that I/We may decide to withdraw such consent at any time. If this form is not returned, your child will not participate in this research project. I further understand that all identifiable information will be removed from this research and kept confidential under the protection of _____ and Oklahoma State University.

_____

Parent/Guardian Date

_____

Parent/Guardian Date

The _____ would like to survey your preadolescent or adolescent on how they perceive your family's ability to cope with change (family adaptability) and bonding of the family and individuality (family cohesion). The survey he/she will respond to is the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale III (FACES III). We would also like to find out if your preadolescent or adolescent perceives themselves as in control of their lives or more likely to allow outside situations to control them (Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale-Children).

These same tests will be given to a random number of preadolescents from the mid-high and adolescents from the high school. The scores will be compared with the scores of preadolescents and adolescents being seen in counseling at three community counseling centers. At no time will names be used or mentioned; only the test score and the age of the subject will be used.

The scores from FACES III and the Nowicki-Strickland will be compared to see if there is a relationship between how they see their family dynamics and their own personal control patterns. These results may be helpful to family counselors in their understanding of the family systems along with the personal control patterns of preadolescents and adolescents.

Therefore, an increase in family functioning and personal growth of preadolescents and adolescents in counseling may result from the use of this research.

VITA

Kenneth Charles Pearce

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: RELATIONSHIP OF FAMILY COHESION AND FAMILY ADAPTABILITY TO LOCUS OF CONTROL OF PREADOLESCENTS AND ADOLESCENTS

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February, 1987, to May, 1987; Doctoral Intern Counselor at Bethany Pavilion, Bethany, Oklahoma, June, 1987, to August, 1987; Doctoral Intern Counselor at Oklahoma Christian Counseling Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, September, 1986, to August, 1987; Member of Oklahoma District Task Force on Child Abuse; Member of Oklahoma County Adolescent Task Force; Advisory Board Member of the Displaced Homemakers Program at Francis-Tuttle Vo-Tech; Member of Oklahoma Association of Child Institution and Agencies.