

INTEREST IN TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY
AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS AND
ITS RELATIONSHIP
TO DOGMATISM

By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Psychoanalysis and Behaviorism are the perspectives which have dominated traditional psychology in America. Many psychologists in the 1950's expressed dissatisfaction with the shortcomings of the two perspectives. A "Third Force" in psychology arose in protest against those reductionistic, mechanistic and deterministic approaches to the study of human beings (Giorgi, 1981). The new perspective, humanistic psychology, seeks to study the human being as an integrated whole and has the study of the nature of human consciousness as a major theme (Tageson, 1982).

Out of humanistic psychology has emerged a "Fourth Force", transpersonal psychology, which focuses on transcendence of the personal self and on the scientific study of altered states of consciousness. Transpersonal psychology, as often happens with new ideas, has not yet been fully accepted by the establishment. Results of a recent survey of instructors of transpersonal psychology revealed that reaction to this newest perspective within the discipline of psychology has ranged from acceptance, through indifference, to resistance (Davis & Wright, 1987).

Although a part of humanistic psychology at its inception, transpersonal psychology has also felt rejection from within the ranks of humanistic psychologists. Rollo May, in a letter to the APA Monitor (May, 1986) stated that he was echoing the concerns of other psychologists when he said that "trans" personal literally means "leaping across" or "throwing out" the person. He referred to Maslow's "pointing beyond humanistic psychology to":

A still higher Fourth Psychology, transpersonal, transhuman, centered in the cosmos rather than in human needs and interests, going beyond humanness, identity, self-actualization and the like (p.2).

May felt that this "Fourth Psychology" did not adequately address the range of human needs and experiences which includes the negative characteristics also. He further argued that a proposed Division of Transpersonal Psychology was not necessary, saying:

I am convinced that a Division of Transpersonal Psychology would radically confuse the areas of psychology and religion, and should be rejected by the Council of Representatives (p. 2).

The Petition for the Transpersonal Division was defeated by the Council.

Davis and Wright (1987) suggest that one of the factors in the defeat of that petition for a Transpersonal Division may have been the difficulty that some members of the Council might have had in understanding the various definitions of transpersonal psychology available to them.

An example of the type of "definition" which may have been difficult for some to understand is a statement made by Sutich (1969) at the founding of the Journal of Transpersonal Psychology:

The emerging Transpersonal Psychology ("fourth force") is concerned specifically with the empirical, scientific study of, and responsible implementation of the findings relevant to, becoming, individual and species-wide meta-needs, ultimate values, unitive consciousness, peak experiences, B-values, ecstasy, mystical experience, awe, being, self-actualization, essence, bliss, wonder, ultimate meaning, transcendence of the self, spirit, oneness, cosmic awareness, individual and species-wide synergy, maximal interpersonal encounter, sacralization of everyday life, transcendental phenomena, cosmic self-humor and playfulness, maximal sensory awareness, responsiveness and expression, and related concepts, experiences and activities (p.1).

Since the beginning, there has been a lack of consensus among psychologists interested in transpersonal psychology as to its definition. While an openness to a variety of theories and ideas is valued, Davis and Wright (1987) state that the lack of a clearer definition of transpersonal psychology has, perhaps, contributed to resistance to the perspective. Various statements of purpose or lists of aims or lists of topics have served as definitions of sorts for transpersonal psychology. Davis and Wright (1987) gathered data which produced a list of the topics "most dealt with" in transpersonal psychology courses, and a working definition of transpersonal psychology. According to Davis and Wright (1987) the results of their survey:

support the view that transpersonal psychology is the field which applies psychological methods and concepts to the traditional subject matter of religion and spiritual disciplines (p.1).

Difficulty in understanding a definition of the new perspective may not be the only impediment to its acceptance. Another factor which sometimes slows the progress of new ideas is closed-mindedness, a reaction to the "newness" of the ideas. It is not unusual for new ideas to have difficulty gaining entrance into the comfortably settled world of academia. Rokeach (1960) discusses open/closed-mindedness in terms of a conflict between an individual's "need to know" and his/her need to "defend against threat." Where the need to know predominates, openness is the result, while predominance of the need to defend against threat produces the characteristic of closedness. He goes on to discuss the contrast between those views of human nature held by traditional psychologists and those held by psychologists who identified themselves with the new movement in psychology (later to be called humanistic and transpersonal psychologies). Rokeach states that the danger faced by such a "protest movement"(humanistic and transpersonal psychology) is that traditional psychologists will overreact in an attempt to reinforce those views that they already hold.

Kuiken (1981) has the following to say about the acceptance of humanistic psychology among traditional psychologists:

The label 'humanistic psychologist' is as flattering and dangerous as the biblical Joseph's robe. Some members of the psychological family suspect their younger brother of gaudy display while they diligently and scientifically pasture the flock. A few encourage a protective tolerance of the fanciful and ambitious dreamer. Still others are anxious to oust the interloper - but will be satisfied to sell him to Ishmaelites headed for the nearest growth center (p. 159).

There seems to be sufficient evidence that transpersonal psychology has met with a less than fully enthusiastic reception among traditional psychologists. However, there have been no studies on the acceptance of transpersonal psychology among college students. The purpose of this study is to investigate the attitudes of college students with regard to their level of acceptance of the discipline of transpersonal psychology. The variable of level of acceptance of transpersonal psychology is defined in terms of level of interest in taking a course in transpersonal psychology. To properly interpret the data obtained on the measurement of the first variable, it is necessary to know the student's interest in psychology generally. Thus, a second variable is level of interest in general psychology. These two variables are both measured by the Academic Interest Survey, a research instrument constructed by the experimenter for this purpose.

In consideration of the idea already advanced that closed-mindedness is a possible contributor to a low level of acceptance of a new discipline, it is of interest to know if there is a relationship between level of acceptance of

transpersonal psychology and closed-mindedness. Hence, a third variable of the study is degree of open/closed-mindedness, defined as dogmatism, and measured by the Dogmatism Scale (Rokeach, 1960).

Consideration of the problem of low level of acceptance of transpersonal psychology among some psychologists, and the lack of knowledge as to the attitudes of college students towards the subject, has resulted in the following research questions.

Research Question 1

Among college students, is there less interest in transpersonal psychology than in general (traditional) psychology?

Research Question 2

Among college students, does a relationship exist between level of interest in transpersonal psychology and dogmatism?

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

There has been no research done on the variables of this study, level of interest in transpersonal psychology, level of interest in general psychology, and dogmatism, as they relate to each other. This chapter will be concerned with the literature which addresses separately the subjects of transpersonal psychology and dogmatism. The involvement of transpersonal psychology with humanistic psychology, especially in their beginnings, will make it necessary to include considerable mention of humanistic psychology in the section on transpersonal psychology.

Humanistic and Transpersonal Psychology

Transpersonal psychology began as part of humanistic psychology in the early 1960's with the founding of the Journal of Humanistic Psychology and the Association for Humanistic Psychology. Maslow, Rogers and others had already begun in the 1950's to react to the Behaviorism prevalent in psychology at the time.

The disenchantment many felt is exemplified in the following anonymous quote:

Etymologically, the term psychology means science of the soul, or mind, but someone has already observed that psychology lost its soul at the hand of Freudian determinists and lost its mind as a result of the behaviorists' insistence on objectivity and measurement (Tageson, 1982, p. 2).

There was a tendency among those spearheading the new "protest movement" to describe humanistic psychology in terms of what it was against, namely:

theoretical explanations and overt behavior, against mechanistic and reductionistic terms, against objectivity, and against the determination of the individual by outside forces (Giorgi, 1981, p. 23).

According to Grauman (1981), humanism has always been related to education. The earliest was classical humanism which aimed at personality formation through study of Greek and Roman antiquity. He states, "At the time of the Renaissance, this humanism was one way of emancipation from medieval dogmatism." (p.5). Humanism has branched and evolved and now exists in several forms.

Holism, an important concept in humanistic psychology, means studying the individual as a whole, recognizing the need to respect the unity of human consciousness and experiencing. This is in reaction to biological reductionism which seeks to reduce everything psychological to physiological events and eventually to physical and chemical events. It is also in reaction to mathematical reductionism which attempts to reduce qualitative aspects of human experience and behavior to quantifiable phenomena.

Humanistic psychologists recognize the dilemma involved in attempting to study individuals in a scientific way, while avoiding the reductionism of the scientific method used in the natural sciences (Tageson, 1982).

Phenomenology has been part of the answer to that problem. The phenomenological movement began with Edmund Husserl's development of a school of phenomenological philosophy. His aim was "to lay the foundations of absolutely certain knowledge and to make philosophy a rigorous science" (Weckowicz, 1981, p. 54).

Phenomenology is related to an approach to science which refrains from researcher manipulation and from attempts at causal or theoretical explanations. Rather it relies on observation and description, the researcher carefully examining and noting personal preconceptions and attitudes pertinent to the research situation.

Existentialism, another important concept in humanistic psychology, is a school of philosophy which seeks to understand the human condition, both in physical manifestation and in the emotional experience attendant on that physical existence (Valle, 1978). Existentialism aims at the resolution of the problem of freedom of choice versus moral responsibility. The existential goal of humanistic psychologists is the healthy psychological functioning of the self-aware individual who has become responsible for his/her own existence. This quality is called authenticity and is characterized by an inner locus of evaluation

(Tageson, 1982) and the practice of relating to others without resorting to superficial social roles.

Self-transcendence is another key issue in humanistic psychology though it is interpreted somewhat differently among the various psychologists. Some consider self-transcendence to be the freedom of being able to go backward in time through memory or forward in time through imagination, and to be able to feel the emotions of these experiences (Tageson, 1982). For others it is reaching beyond the self in response to a need to make contact with an Absolute. This need is seen to be as real as needs for love or recognition or physical nourishment and as deserving of attention in the field of psychology (Nuttin, 1962).

It is specific emphasis on this major theme of self-transcendence, possibly regarded as an altered state of consciousness, which distinguishes transpersonal psychology. Transpersonal psychologists believe that the benefits of exploring a wider range of consciousness include enhancement of our understanding of mental, physical and emotional health in human beings. They regard human development as an integration of spiritual and psychological development.

Andrew Neher teaches courses in transpersonal psychology and has written a book about the subject, which he calls transcendental psychology. In stating the perspective of the book, he has the following to say about transcendental psychology:

Transcendental psychology is concerned with a whole spectrum of experiences that entail heightened functioning. Transcendental psychology encompasses, for example:

1. Heightened sensitivity that appears to go beyond the capacity of the senses.
2. Visionary states in which elaborate and seemingly real images are experienced.
3. Mental elicitation of physiological processes to facilitate healing and to maintain a state of health.
4. Altered states of consciousness in which consciously forgotten experiences are remembered in elaborate detail.
5. Flashes of creative insight, which seem to come "out of nowhere."
6. States of consciousness in which intricate tasks are performed without conscious awareness and beyond ordinary capabilities.
7. Mystical and ecstatic states that involve overwhelming feelings of joy and contentment and that can add meaning and significance to life.

(1980, p.3)

The transpersonal psychologist approaches scientifically the study of altered states of consciousness, their nature, their causes, techniques of achieving them and their effect on the experiencer.

William James, considered a forerunner by many in the field of transpersonal psychology, made the following statement which is often quoted in the literature:

Our normal waking consciousness, rational consciousness as we call it, is but one special type of consciousness, whilst all about it, parted from it by the filmiest of screens, there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different. We may go through life without suspecting their existence; but apply the requisite stimulus, and at a touch they are there in all their completeness, definite types of mentality which probably somewhere have their field of application and adaptation. No account

of the universe in its totality can be final which leaves these other forms of consciousness quite disregarded. How to regard them is the question-- for they are so discontinuous with ordinary consciousness. Yet they may determine attitudes though they cannot furnish formulas, and open a region though they fail to give a map. At any rate, they forbid a premature closing of our accounts with reality. (1929, pp. 378-379)

Tart has offered the field this definition of an altered state of consciousness:

one in which he [the experiencer] clearly feels a qualitative shift in his pattern of mental functioning, that is, he feels not just a quantitative shift (more or less alert, more or less visual imagery, sharper or duller, etc.), but also that some quality or qualities of his mental processes are different" (1969, pp. 1-2).

Krippner (1972) has provided a taxonomy of 20 altered states of consciousness which includes, besides normal waking consciousness, the dreaming state, the drug induced "expanded" state, and the meditative state.

Tart (1975) asserts that many of these altered states of consciousness are of a spiritual nature and require a new paradigm for research. He reports on the practices of religious mysticism that are used in the pursuit of personal liberation. Tart states that various types of meditation techniques are discussed and/or taught in transpersonal psychology courses as well as the ideas and theories of the spiritual traditions which employ meditation as a religious practice.

Ornstein (1972) also calls for a view of consciousness which includes intuition as well as rational processes and

new approaches to research which accommodate this more complete view of consciousness. He supports his position by referring to Aldous Huxley's (1954) statement that human consciousness is the result of "Mind at Large" being funneled through the reducing valve of the brain and nervous system. Huxley's statement included the suggestion that there are ways to bypass the reducing valve, such as meditation, drugs, hypnosis or being born with a natural, built-in bypass.

Other ideas discussed in transpersonal psychology classes are reincarnation and the similarities between ideas in modern physics and eastern mysticism. The list of topics from the survey by Davis and Wright (1987) appears in Appendix B. A review of this list will help to give the reader a more complete understanding of the nature of transpersonal psychology and the college courses in which it is taught. Davis and Wright (1987) point out that it would be helpful in promoting the acceptance of transpersonal psychology if those in the field would remember to emphasize the fact that the "trans" in transpersonal is related to the concept of transcendence.

Dogmatism

Rokeach (1960) uses the term "high dogmatics" to refer to individuals whose belief systems, modes of thought and belief, are characteristically "closed". The dogmatically held views and opinions could be on any subject and at

either extreme of opinion on that subject. The closed way of thinking was seen by Rokeach to be typified by an authoritarian outlook on life and by an accompanying acceptance of persons with similar beliefs and rejection of those with opposing beliefs. Those individuals identified as having "open" belief systems were referred to as "low dogmatics." Rokeach was careful to point out that no person's belief system is completely closed or completely open. The majority of people can be expected to display some evidence of both modes of functioning but will usually favor one mode over the other most of the time.

Rokeach described characteristics that may be observed in persons with closed belief systems to include a narrow, future-oriented time perspective, a view of the world as threatening, and the inability to evaluate information independent of the source. The converse should be seen in persons with open belief systems. They are more likely to be found to be present-time-oriented, to view the world as a friendly place and to judge information on its own merits. Persons with closed systems are likely to be overreliant on authority, not because of correctness of the authority but because of the ability of the authority to mete out reward and punishment.

A study done by Plant, Telford, and Thomas (1965) found that high dogmatics were psychologically immature, impulsive, defensive and stereotyped in their thinking. Low Dogmatics were described as outgoing and enterprising, calm,

mature and forceful, efficient and clear thinking, responsible and more likely to succeed in an academic setting. Results of a study done to determine acceptance of "new system" music as compared to acceptance of conventional music showed that high dogmatics were significantly less accepting of the new type of music (Mikol, 1960).

Significant decreases in dogmatism have been found from lower to higher grade levels in high school (Anderson, 1962; Pannes, 1963) and during attendance at college (Marcus, 1964; Plant & Telford, 1966). Information on the Dogmatism Scale and on studies pertinent to the validity and reliability of the instrument are found in Chapter III.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Subjects

98 students took part in this study. All were enrolled in general psychology courses at an urban junior college in the southwestern United States. There were 64 females and 34 males in the sample. The age range was 17 to 57 with a mean of 26 years. Hometown populations ranged from 260 to 5,000,000 with a population mean of about 320,000.

The following is information provided by the junior college where data for this study were collected. It describes the general student body at the time the study was done. 49 percent of the students attended day classes, 40 percent attended night classes, and 11 percent attended both day classes and night classes. 28 percent were full time students and 72 percent attended part time. 38 percent were male, 62 percent were female, and the average age was 29 years. 60 to 70 percent of the students take courses for personal interest or for job certification while 30 to 40 percent of them plan to transfer to a four-year college.

Two questions in the personal data questionnaire (see Appendix C) concerned (1) the frequency of attendance at a place of worship and (2) importance of spirituality in daily

life. Median scores for the responses to these two questions indicate that the members of the sample (1) attend a place of worship about once or twice a month (see Table I) and (2) consider spirituality to be an important aspect of their daily lives (see Table II). Median scores for these two questions are (1) 2 and (2) 2.

TABLE I
NUMBER RESPONDING IN EACH CATEGORY TO QUESTION
ABOUT ATTENDANCE AT A PLACE OF WORSHIP

Response Category	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Number Responding	45	14	19	19

N=97
Med. = 2

TABLE II
NUMBER RESPONDING IN EACH CATEGORY TO QUESTION ABOUT
IMPORTANCE OF SPIRITUALITY IN DAILY LIFE

Response Category	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Number Responding	39	32	16	9	1

N=97
Med. = 2

A wide variety of majors was declared by the members of the sample. The areas of health care, education, and psychology were mentioned most often. A list of majors declared, and the number declaring each, appears in Appendix A.

Instruments

Dogmatism Scale

The Dogmatism Scale (see Appendix E) was designed by Rokeach (1960) to measure degree of open/closedmindedness. The items of the test are constructed to gauge the relative openness or closedness of a person's belief systems. While most items were constructed by the author, some of the items were borrowed from established sources, such as the MMPI, and other items were remarks overhead from individuals who were judged to be closed-minded by the author of the test. A 6-point Likert rating scale which forces agreement or disagreement is provided for response to the items. From +1 to +3 indicates progression from slight agreement to strong agreement, while -1 to -3 goes from slight disagreement to strong disagreement. Items are statements of opinion or statements of self-disclosure.

The instructions for the Dogmatism Scale ask that test-takers write beside each item one of the numbers, from +3 to -3, which is most indicative of how much they agree or disagree with that item. For each item, agreement is scored as closed and disagreement as open. For purposes of

scoring, a constant of 4 is added to the score for each item, converting the scale to a 1 to 7 scale. The total Dogmatism score is the sum of the scores obtained on all items of the test. The time required to complete the test is about 15 minutes.

Rokeach, Gladin and Trumbo (1960) conducted two studies, by the Method of Known Groups, attempting to establish the construct validity of the Dogmatism Scale. In one study graduate students, nominated by their college professors for inclusion into either of two groups, high dogmatics and low dogmatics, were tested with the Dogmatism Scale. No significant differences were found. In a similar study with students nominated by their peers, significant differences were obtained in the direction expected.

Various researchers have found support for Rokeach's statement that the more closed a person's belief systems, the more difficulty he will have in discriminating between information received and its source (authority). Dependency on authority figures by the high dogmatics has been found in a study involving an auto kinetic task (Vidulich & Kaiman, 1961); in a counselor-training situation (Kemp, 1962); and in the perceived coercive force of authority figures (Wilson, 1964). It has been suggested that an agreement response set may be operative in Dogmatism Scale performance (Couch & Keniston, 1960; Peabody, 1961). If such were the case, the validity of the instrument would be affected,

since agreement is scored as "closed" for each item of the scale.

Odd-even reliabilities for various forms of the test using 12 college student samples ranged from .68 to .91 with a median of .74. Form D, the form of the Dogmatism Scale used in this study, has a corrected reliability of .91. The norming group was 137 English college students. The sample mean was 219.1 with a standard deviation of 28.3. Item analyses has shown that subjects agree or disagree with the items on the test in a consistent manner. These analyses show that high and low dogmatic subjects differ consistently and in a statistically significant manner on the great majority of items (Rokeach, 1960).

Reliability studies done subsequently to Rokeach's reported generally high reliabilities. Roberts (1962) found a corrected split-half reliability of .81 (N=100). Shupe and Wolfer (1966) found twelve to twenty-eight-day retest correlations of .74 to .86.

Form D of the Dogmatism Scale was used in this study to measure the variable of dogmatism. To disguise the purpose of the test the Dogmatism Scale was retitled Current Feelings and Attitudes Scale for use in this study.

Academic Interest Survey

The Academic Interest Survey (see Appendix D) was constructed by the experimenter for the purpose of measuring the variable, level of interest in transpersonal psychology

and level of interest in general psychology. The items of the test are topics that are addressed in psychology courses. Seven of the items are topics that are typically dealt with in college courses that are named Transpersonal Psychology or Humanistic and Transpersonal Psychology. The criteria used in the selection of the transpersonal item topics were the frequency with which they were mentioned in transpersonal psychology courses and uniqueness to the subject of transpersonal psychology. Consequently, they were taken from the top ten topics found in a listing of topics that are addressed in transpersonal psychology courses. This list of topics was the focus of an article which reported the results of a survey designed to arrive at a definition of transpersonal psychology (Davis & Wright, 1986).

These seven transpersonal items were interspersed on the Academic Interest Survey among 14 other items which are topics addressed in general psychology courses. They were selected from the chapter headings of current general psychology texts (Rathus, 1981; Crider, 1983). Topics chosen were those judged by the experimenter to be the ones most often addressed in general psychology courses. The 21 items of the Academic Interest Survey were divided between general and transpersonal topics in the following way. Transpersonal items were items 2, 5, 9, 13, 17, 18 and 21. General items were items 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 19 and 20.

The instructions to the Academic Interest Survey explain that the items of the test are topics that might be discussed in various psychology courses. A 5-point Likert rating scale is provided for response to the items. Test-takers are asked to read each item and circle the number to the right which indicates the degree to which they would or would not be interested in taking a course in which that topic would be discussed. The response categories range from 1 to 5, going from very strong interest, "1", through a neutral category, "3", to no interest at all, "5".

For each subject, separate mean scores were computed for the seven items of the transpersonal interest subscale and the 14 items of the general psychology interest subscale.

The reliability values of the Academic Interest Survey are as follows. The seven items of the transpersonal scale were found to have a split-half correlation of .57 and the 14 items of the general scale had a split-half correlation of .82.

The approximate amount of time required to complete the items of the Academic Interest Survey is 10 minutes.

Procedure

Data were collected during the first two weeks of the summer semester. The personal data questionnaire and the two research instruments were completed by the students during regularly scheduled class periods with the exception

of 13 students from one class who took the questionnaires home to complete and returned them at the next class period.

The students were informed that the experimenter was conducting a research project for the purpose of fulfilling the requirements for a Master's Degree at a nearby state university. Students were then invited to participate in the study without being offered compensation for their participation. In order to protect their privacy, and to encourage complete candor in their responses, participants were asked to refrain from writing their names on the data collection packet. Data collection packets were distributed and subjects were asked to read the instructions at the beginning of each questionnaire and follow the directions, completing every item.

The data collection packet was headed by a questionnaire which was designed to obtain demographic data in the following areas: age, sex, major, population of hometown, frequency of attendance at a place of worship and importance of spirituality in daily life. The time required to complete the personal data questionnaire is about five minutes. The time that it took to complete all three questionnaires that comprised the data collection packet was approximately 30 minutes.

Statistical Analysis

Two data analysis procedures were used in this study. They are the Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-ranks test and

the Spearman rank-difference method of computing a correlation coefficient. It was not possible to determine that the population from which the sample was drawn was normally distributed with respect to the attitudes and personality characteristics that are the variables of this study. As with most of the data that is the result of research in education and the behavioral sciences, the data in this study is ordinal level data, having been obtained through measures that use Likert rating scales. These two circumstances prevent the use of parametric tests in the analysis of this data since this data cannot meet the assumptions of parametric tests. As the groups are the same for each set of scores, a nonparametric test for correlated data was needed to test the differences between the sets of scores on the transpersonal scale and the general scale of the Academic Interest Survey. The Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-ranks test was chosen as the one best suited for this purpose (Bartz, 1976).

Because of the ordinal nature of the data, the Spearman rank-difference method was considered the most appropriate technique (Bartz, 1976) to use in the computation of correlation coefficients between scores on the Dogmatism Scale and each subscale of the Academic Interest Survey.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

In completing the tests, some subjects either made two responses to a single item or they failed to respond to one or two of the items. In the case of two answers for one item, a mean of the two responses was taken and used for the response to that item. If an item was left blank, a mean score was computed for all items of that test (or subscale) and that mean score was used for a response to the item that had been left blank. It was necessary to follow these procedures for 14 of the sets of data. One set of data was invalidated by having nine items left blank. Consequently, data analysis was performed on 97 sets of data.

The variables, level of interest in transpersonal psychology and level of interest in general psychology, were measured by the transpersonal and general scales, respectively, of the Academic Interest Survey. The Wilcoxon test, performed on the two sets of scores from these two scales, was employed to facilitate answering the first research question of this study.

The Spearman r_s was computed between the scores on the Dogmatism Scale, which measured the variable of dogmatism, and scores on the transpersonal and general scales,

respectively, of the Academic Interest Survey. The correlation coefficient between transpersonal scale scores and dogmatism scores was computed in order to answer the second research question.

The statistical analyses were performed using the Systat and Testat computer programs.

Results for Research Question 1

Research Question 1: Among college students, is there less interest in transpersonal psychology than in general (traditional) psychology? Results: The sample mean for the transpersonal subscale of the Academic Interest Survey was 2.86 with a standard deviation of .86, and sample mean for the general subscale was 2.16 with standard deviation of .61. The Wilcoxon test revealed a difference of levels of interest in transpersonal and general psychology, in the direction of less interest in transpersonal psychology, more interest in general psychology. The z score calculated from $T=13$ was -8.5 which was significant ($p \leq .001$) (Klugh, 1974).

Results for Research Question 2

Research Question 2: Among college students, does a relationship exist between level of interest in transpersonal psychology and dogmatism? Results: The sample mean for Dogmatism Scale scores was 243.10 with a standard deviation of 44.91 (for transpersonal subscale mean and standard deviation, see above). The Spearman

correlation coefficient obtained was $-.04$. The negative sign is a false negative because of the opposing directions of the scoring scales of the Academic Interest Survey and the Dogmatism Scale. The higher score on the Dogmatism Scale indicates a more closed belief system, while a higher score on the transpersonal subscale of the Academic Interest Survey indicates less interest in transpersonal psychology. Converting the false negative to a positive, $r_s = .04$. The test for significance of the correlation coefficient yielded $t = .36$, which was not significant for a two-tailed test, ($p = .05$), with 95 degrees of freedom (Klugh, 1974).

The correlation coefficient between dogmatism scores and general psychology scores was computed as a matter of interest. The r_s obtained was $-.16$, which must be converted to $.16$ for accurate interpretation for the reason explained above. $t = 1.57$, which was not significant for a two-tailed test, ($p = .05$), with 95 degrees of freedom (Klugh, 1974).

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the attitudes of college students in regard to their acceptance of transpersonal psychology. Included in this investigation were measures taken to determine whether their level of acceptance of transpersonal psychology was related to open/closed-mindedness. The variables were defined as level of interest in transpersonal psychology, level of interest in general psychology, and dogmatism. An instrument, the Academic Interest Survey, was constructed to measure the first two variables and the Dogmatism Scale was employed to measure the third variable.

The instruments were administered to 98 college students and data obtained were statistically analyzed for 97 subjects using the Wilcoxon rank-difference test and the Spearman rank-difference correlation method. Two research questions were answered and another question which arose during the study was answered. The results for those three questions are discussed in this chapter.

Interpretation of Findings

The results have shown that there is a significant, and even pronounced, difference in levels of interest in transpersonal psychology and general psychology as measured by the subscales of the Academic Interest Survey. The results of the Wilcoxon test reveal a very significant difference, in the direction anticipated, in research question 1, that is, toward less acceptance of transpersonal psychology as compared to acceptance of general psychology. These attitudes of college students toward transpersonal psychology reflect the attitudes of many traditional and some humanistic psychologists as reported earlier in this study.

No relationship was found between dogmatism and level of interest in transpersonal psychology as measured by the Academic Interest Survey and the Dogmatism Scale. The correlation coefficient of .04, which was the result of the Spearman correlation method performed on the two sets of scores, was not found to be significant, which answers research question 2.

Several factors may be considered to have had some effect on the results of this study, the first being the low split-half reliability figure of .57 on the transpersonal scale of the Academic Interest Survey. Contributing to that low reliability figure is the shortness of the transpersonal subscale, as well as the possibility that it may not be a unidimensional scale. Since the Academic Interest Survey

cannot be relied upon to consistently measure level of interest in transpersonal psychology, it is a doubtful candidate for meaningful correlation with other measures.

Another factor to consider is the possibility of response set bias on the Dogmatism Scale. The construction and scoring of the items of the scale (with all items being constructed in the same direction and agreement having high weight in scoring) make the instrument susceptible to response set bias in the judgment of some researchers as reported in Chapter III. This situation has the potential to artificially raise some scores on the Dogmatism Scale and affect the accuracy of correlation coefficients computed with those scores.

A third factor is a possibility of curvilinearity, a question which has been raised by two researchers. Becker (1967) expressed his belief that the Dogmatism Scale is a curvilinear rather than a linear predictor of open-mindedness. Simonton (1983), using another means to assess dogmatism, found a curvilinear relationship between level of education and dogmatism. While examination of the data of this study gave no indication that curvilinearity was involved, there is no doubt that the selection of an inappropriate statistical procedure could certainly yield inaccurate results. A scatterplot of dogmatism scores and transpersonal subscale scores is contained in Appendix F.

It was of interest to know if a relationship existed between dogmatism and level of interest in general

psychology. The Spearman correlation method performed on these two sets of scores yielded a coefficient of .16. This value was not found to be significant. The reliability of the general psychology subscale of the Academic Interest Survey is a respectable .82, but there is still the possibility that the second and third possible explanations, mentioned in connection with the relationship between transpersonal scores and dogmatism scores, could also be affecting the accuracy of this correlation coefficient.

Conclusions

The main purpose of this study was to provide empirical data where none previously existed on the attitudes of college students towards transpersonal psychology, specifically, on their level of acceptance of that new perspective within the field of psychology. The results of this study have served to provide that data. There is, among college students, less acceptance of transpersonal psychology than of general psychology (as defined and measured by the Academic Interest Survey). The secondary issue of the relationship of low acceptance of transpersonal psychology to dogmatism was not established in this study as no such relationship was found.

The members of this sample have described themselves to be, to a large degree, technical-job-oriented, religiously inclined, and are residing in an area of the country in which traditional, conservative values prevail. Given the

almost-esoteric nature of the topics of transpersonal psychology, and considering the fact that this new perspective within psychology has been identified with a "protest movement", it seems likely that some form of conservatism is related to the low level of acceptance of transpersonal psychology revealed in the results of this study.

Recommendations

Perhaps a better method for finding reasons why someone would be less accepting of something is to take a cue from phenomenological research and to simply ask them. It is recommended that a study be undertaken which allows the subjects to explain why they would or would not be interested in the topics of transpersonal psychology. This could be done by providing response categories from which subjects could make choices or by allowing subjects opportunities to make essay responses.

Another approach that could yield useful information in the area is to survey and/or test those people who elect to take courses in transpersonal psychology. To learn about the characteristics of those who are more accepting of transpersonal psychology may also provide clues for studying those who are less so.

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APPENDIX A

LIST OF MAJORS

Business Education	1	Chemical Engineering	1
Industrial Arts Education	1	Music Education	1
Veterinary Medicine	1	Computer Science Business	2
Political Science	2	Computer Drafting	1
Wildlife Ecology	1	Criminal Justice	2
Nursing	23	Finance	1
Education of Deaf	1	Business Management	1
Psychology	7	Undeclared	14
Medical Assistant	3		
Math	2		
Secondary Education	2		
Elementary Education	2		
Administrative Management	1		
Early Child Development	1		
Computer Programming	1		
Accounting	2		
Art	3		
History	1		
Law	2		
Drafting	1		
Radiologic Technology	1		
Respiratory Therapy	1		
Computer Maintenance	1		
Biology	1		
Fashion Merchandising	2		
Medicine	1		
Electrical Engineering	1		
Education	3		
Radio-TV-Film, News & Public Affairs	1		
Sociology	1		
Legal Assistant	1		
Family Relations & Child Development.....	1		
Business	1		

APPENDIX B

LIST OF TRANSPERSONAL TOPICS

Most Frequent Topics Dealt With "A Great Deal"

Rank	Topic	Percent of Classes
All Classes (N=21)		
1.	Consciousness, Altered States of Consciousness	81
2.	Meditation Techniques	57
3.	Relationship of Religion and Transpersonal Psychology	
	Philosophical Foundations of Transpersonal Psychology	52
4.	Spectrum Model	48
5.	Buddhism and Buddhist Psychology	38
	Cognitive Psychology	
	Imagery and Visualization	
	Physics, "New Physics"	
6.	Dreams	33
	Psychodynamic Psychology	

Classes Labeled "Transpersonal Psychology" (N=9)

1.	Consciousness Altered State of Consciousness	77
	Meditation Techniques	
2.	Cognitive Psychology	56
	Philosophical Foundations of Transpersonal Psychology	
3.	Meditation Research	44
	Relationship of religion and transpersonal Psychology	
	Transpersonal Psychotherapy	
4.	Buddhism and Buddhist Psychology	33
	Psychodynamic Psychology	
	Spectrum Model	
	Transpersonal Psychology: Definitions	
	Transpersonal Psychology: History	
	Teachings of other specific approaches or traditions	

APPENDIX C

PERSONAL DATA QUESTIONNAIRE

Please provide personal data by filling in the blanks below.

Age_____ Sex_____ Major (if decided)_____

The population of my hometown is approximately_____

Circle the number below which indicates the frequency with which you attend a place of worship.

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1) Seldom or never | 3) Three to four times a month |
| 2) Once or twice a month | 4) More than four times a month |

Circle the number which indicates your agreement or disagreement with the following statement.

	<u>YES!</u>	yes	?	no	<u>NO!</u>
Spirituality is a very important aspect of my daily life.....	1	2	3	4	5

Please complete the two questionnaires on the following pages.

APPENDIX D

ACADEMIC INTEREST SURVEY

ACADEMIC INTEREST SURVEY

Below are some topics that might be discussed in various psychology courses. Read each topic and then circle the number to its right that indicates the degree to which you would or would not be interested in taking a course in which that topic would be discussed. The answer choices range from very strong interest ("YES!") to no interest at all ("NO!").

	<u>YES!</u>	yes	?	no	<u>NO!</u>
1. Theories of Personality Development.....	1	2	3	4	5
2. The Nature of Consciousness.....	1	2	3	4	5
3. Stress and Related Disorders.....	1	2	3	4	5
4. Theories about the Development of Moral Reasoning.....	1	2	3	4	5
5. Buddhism and Buddhist Psychology.....	1	2	3	4	5
6. The Contributions of Heredity and Environment in Behavior and Development.....	1	2	3	4	5
7. How Human Beings Learn.....	1	2	3	4	5
8. Approaches to Psychotherapy.....	1	2	3	4	5
9. Altered States of Consciousness.....	1	2	3	4	5
10. Theories of Development of Moral Reasoning.....	1	2	3	4	5
11. Personality and Intelligence Tests.....	1	2	3	4	5
12. Major Psychological Disorders.....	1	2	3	4	5
13. Past Lives, Reincarnation.....	1	2	3	4	5
14. Theories of Human Motivation.....	1	2	3	4	5
15. Human Beings in Social Interaction.....	1	2	3	4	5
16. Language, Thought and Intelligence.....	1	2	3	4	5
17. The Relationship Between Religion and Psychology.....	1	2	3	4	5
18. Meditation Techniques.....	1	2	3	4	5

	<u>YES!</u>	yes	?	no	<u>NO!</u>
19. Memory in Human Beings.....	1	2	3	4	5
20. Social Adjustment and Maladjustment....	1	2	3	4	5
21. The Similarities between Ideas in Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism.....	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX E

DOGMATISM SCALE

CURRENT FEELINGS AND ATTITUDES SCALE

The following is a study of what the general public thinks and feels about a number of important social and personal questions. The best answer to each statement below is your personal opinion. We have tried to cover many different and opposing points of view; you may find yourself agreeing strongly with some of the statements, disagreeing just as strongly with others, and perhaps uncertain about others; whether you agree or disagree with any statement, you can be sure that many people feel the same as you do.

Mark each statement in the left margin according to how much you agree or disagree with it. Please mark every one.

Write +1, +2, +3, or -1, -2, -3, depending on how you feel in each case.

+1: I AGREE A LITTLE	-1: I DISAGREE A LITTLE
+2: I AGREE ON THE WHOLE	-2: I DISAGREE ON THE WHOLE
+3: I AGREE VERY MUCH	-3: I DISAGREE VERY MUCH

- ___1. The United States and Russia have just about nothing in common.
- ___2. Communism and Catholicism have nothing in common.
- ___3. The principles I have come to believe in are quite different from those believed in by most people.
- ___4. In a heated discussion people have a way of bringing up irrelevant issues rather than sticking to the main issue.
- ___5. The highest form of government is a democracy and the highest form of democracy is a government run by those who are most intelligent.
- ___6. Even though freedom of speech for all groups is a worthwhile goal, it is unfortunately necessary to restrict the freedom of certain political groups.
- ___7. While the use of force is wrong by and large, it is sometimes the only way possible to advance a noble ideal.
- ___8. Even though I have a lot of faith in the intelligence and wisdom of the common man I must say that the masses behave stupidly at times.
- ___9. It is only natural that a person would have a much better acquaintance with ideas he believes in than with ideas he opposes.
- ___10. There are certain "isms" which are really the same even though those who believe in these "isms" try to tell you they are different.
- ___11. Man on his own is a helpless and miserable creature.
- ___12. Fundamentally, the world we live in is a pretty lonesome place.

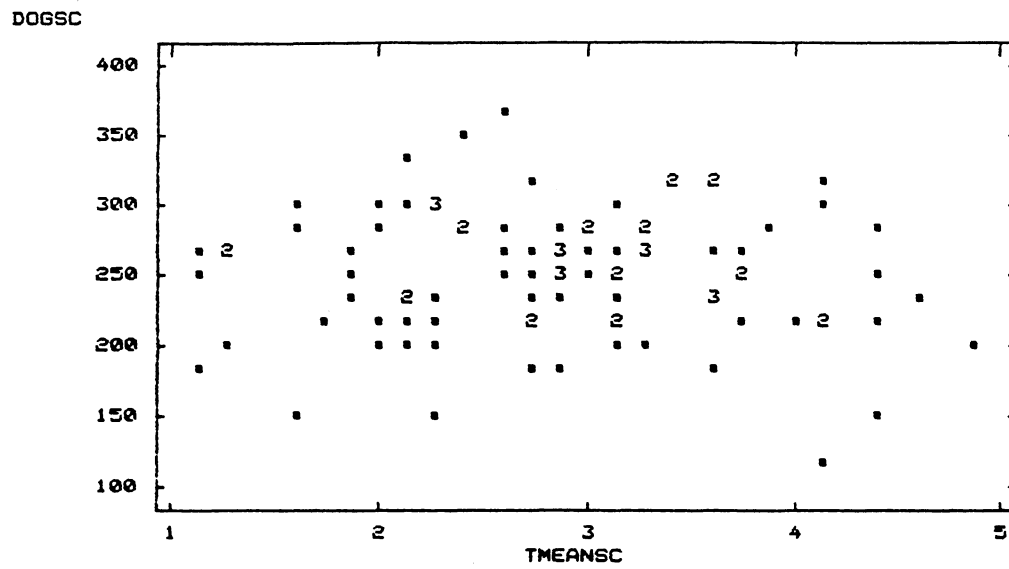
- ___13. Most people just don't give a "damn" for others.
- ___14. I'd like it if I could find someone who would tell me how to solve my personal problems.
- ___15. It is only natural for a person to be rather fearful of the future.
- ___16. There is so much to be done and so little time to do it in.
- ___17. Once I get wound up in a heated discussion I just can't stop.
- ___18. In a discussion I often find it necessary to repeat myself several times to make sure I am being understood.
- ___19. In a heated discussion I generally become so absorbed in what I am going to say that I forget to listen to what the others are saying.
- ___20. In a discussion I sometimes interrupt others too much in my eagerness to put across my own point of view.
- ___21. It is better to be a dead hero than to be a live coward.
- ___22. My hardest battles are with myself.
- ___23. At times I think I am no good at all.
- ___24. I am afraid of people who want to find out what I'm really like for fear they'll be disappointed in me.
- ___25. While I don't like to admit this even to myself, my secret ambition is to become a great man, like Einstein, or Beethoven, or Shakespeare.
- ___26. The main thing in life is for a person to want to do something important.
- ___27. If given the chance I would do something of great benefit to the world.
- ___28. If I had to choose between happiness and greatness, I'd choose greatness.
- ___29. It's all too true that people just won't practice what they preach.
- ___30. Most people are failures and it is the system which is responsible for this.
- ___31. I have often felt that strangers were looking at me critically.
- ___32. It is only natural for a person to have a guilty conscience.
- ___33. People say insulting and vulgar things about me.
- ___34. I am sure I am being talked about.

- ___ 35. In the history of mankind there have probably been just a handful of really great thinkers.
- ___ 36. There are a number of people I have come to hate because of the things they stand for.
- ___ 37. A man who does not believe in some great cause has not really lived.
- ___ 38. It is only when a person devotes himself to an ideal or cause that life becomes meaningful.
- ___ 39. Of all the different philosophies which exist in this world there is probably only one which is correct.
- ___ 40. A person who gets enthusiastic about too many causes is likely to be a pretty "wishy-washy" sort of person.
- ___ 41. To compromise with our political opponents is dangerous because it usually leads to the betrayal of our own side.
- ___ 42. When it comes to differences of opinion in religion we must be careful not to compromise with those who believe differently from the way we do.
- ___ 43. In times like these, a person must be pretty selfish if he considers primarily his own happiness.
- ___ 44. To compromise with our political opponents is to be guilty of appeasement.
- ___ 45. The worst crime a person could commit is to attack publicly the people who believe in the same thing he does.
- ___ 46. In times like these it is often necessary to be more on guard against ideas put out by people or groups in one's own camp than by those in the opposing camp.
- ___ 47. A group which tolerates too much differences of opinion among its own members cannot exist for long.
- ___ 48. There are two kinds of people in this world: those who are for the truth and those who are against the truth.
- ___ 49. My blood boils whenever a person stubbornly refuses to admit he's wrong.
- ___ 50. A person who thinks primarily of his own happiness is beneath contempt.
- ___ 51. Most of the ideas which get printed nowadays aren't worth the paper they are printed on.
- ___ 52. I sometimes have a tendency to be too critical of the ideas of others.
- ___ 53. In this complicated world of ours the only way we can know what's going on is to rely on leaders or experts who can be trusted.

- ___ 54. It is often desirable to reserve judgment about what's going on until one has had a chance to hear the opinions of those one respects.
- ___ 55. In the long run the best way to live is to pick friends and associates whose tastes and beliefs are the same as one's own.
- ___ 56. There's no use wasting your money on newspapers which you know in advance are just plain propaganda.
- ___ 57. Young people should not have too easy access to books which are likely to confuse them.
- ___ 58. The present is all too often full of unhappiness. It is only the future that counts.
- ___ 59. It is by returning to our glorious and forgotten past that real social progress can be achieved.
- ___ 60. To achieve the happiness of mankind in the future it is sometimes necessary to put up with injustices in the present.
- ___ 61. If a man is to accomplish his mission in life it is sometimes necessary to gamble "all or nothing at all."
- ___ 62. Unfortunately, a good many people with whom I have discussed important social and moral problems don't really understand what's going on.
- ___ 63. Most people just don't know what's good for them.
- ___ 64. There is nothing new under the sun.
- ___ 65. To one who really takes the trouble to understand the world he lives in, it's an easy matter to predict future events.
- ___ 66. It is sometimes necessary to resort to force to advance an ideal one strongly believes in.

APPENDIX F

SCATTERPLOT OF DOGMATISM SCORES AND
TRANSPERSONAL SUBSCALE SCORES



VITA ²

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