FUTURE TIME PERSPECTIVE AND GOAL SETTING AMONG

COLLEGE STUDENTS: A MEASUREMENT FOR THE DIMENSIONS OF

FUTURE TIME PERSPECTIVE

An Undergraduate Research Scholars Thesis

by

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ABSTRACT

Future Time Perspective and Goal Setting Among College Students: A Measurement for the
Dimensions of Future Time Perspective

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The perceptions of the future, including attitudes, beliefs, and actions toward it, have been formalized into a construct known as Future Time Perspective (FTP). The purpose of this study was to determine if college students' FTP was significantly different based on demographics, and to determine if the time frame of a goal (academic, professional, personal, or social) would more likely be short-term or long-term. Participants were undergraduate freshmen (first-year) and senior (fourth-year) students enrolled in Texas A&M University. Findings revealed that significant differences in FTP can be found in certain demographic variables such as sex and race, and that classification may predict the time frame in which a certain type of goal will be set. Overall, these findings can assist mentors in a university by giving them a better understanding of how their student mentees perceive the future and how likely they are to set a certain goal in a specific time frame. These attitudes of the future and the time frame differences in which goals are set may impact how successful a student is in a university.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Attending a university can be seen as a milestone for students. These years, people are experiencing their first years of adulthood, possibly learning to live away from home for the first time and constructing the career path they will follow long after graduation. Their choices may extend beyond their profession, affecting values, attitudes, and even their own identity (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Often, these choices require people to consider the future and what steps they will take toward it. Due to this, researchers have long been focused on understanding how humans make sense of the future. The study of the future as perceived by individuals has been formally viewed under the construct known as Future Time Perspective (FTP). This paper aims to examine the findings of FTP by each construct and to explore how FTP functions among college students in order to determine if there is a pattern in the types of goals college students set for themselves. Overall, this study aims to provide insight to how college students view the future.

Literature Review

FTP is a broad topic that has several definitions. Broadly speaking, its scope can encompass an entire field of work that investigates a person's attitudes and beliefs toward the future (Husman & Shell, 2008). In a stricter sense, it can be defined as an understanding of how these attitudes and beliefs interact in such a way as to influence what goals a person sets, how far away these goals are temporally, and how likely a person is to actually achieve them (Husman & Lens, 1999). Given the variety of influence that peoples' time perception has on their activities, it comes as no surprise that FTP is often studied to understand a myriad of activities and processes.

These activities can range from work motivation (Seijts, 2010) to the illegal use of cannabis (Apostolidis, Fieulaine, & Soulé, 2006).

However, apart from being broad, FTP is also a relatively new topic, which presents a problem for researchers. Most studies have focused on how FTP relates to the past (Suddendorf & Busby, 2005), but newer research investigating how FTP impacts goal-setting has relied on interpretations of the future. Moreover, there are opposing stances on the dimensions of FTP. Daltrey and Langer (1984) showed evidence for a unidimensional construct of FTP given the lack of good instruments able to accurately measure it through a multidimensional perspective. Nevertheless, more studies after Daltrey and Langer's (1984) have continued to approach FTP as a multidimensional construct (Bembenutty, 2002; Bembenutty & Karabenick, 2004; Husman & Shell, 2008).

Within the view that FTP is multidimensional, several researchers claim that there are certain dimensions that are generally represented across most studies, and yet even these are listed differently. Daltrey and Langer (1984) claim that researchers who believe in a multidimensional approach of FTP cite extension, coherence, directionality, density, and attitude/affectivity as FTP's dimensions. Husman and Shell (2008) instead claim that the stable dimensions are valence, extension, speed, and connectedness.

In any case, the problems that researchers face in perfectly conceptualizing every aspect of FTP does not undermine the significance of the actions it aims to explain, such as goal setting. The decision to prioritize a certain goal over others can have large implications for students. Lang and Carstensen (2002) found that people with a low FTP score prioritized goals that emphasized care for others, meanwhile those with high FTP scores prioritized goals whose primary focus was within themselves, such as to be socially accepted or to be autonomous. The

importance of these finding is that those who place a greater importance on social acceptance are known to have a larger network of friends and get more advice (Lang & Carstensen, 2002). When thinking about academics, it is evident that those with more social capital benefit because their peers form a network of knowledge and support capable of helping them find a job or an internship (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007). The benefits of social capital are present even for online relationships, as people with low satisfaction and low self-esteem have been found to benefit from Facebook connections (Ellison et. al, 2007). For this reason, FTP scores provide insights on how setting certain goals will impact students.

Several researchers have also observed the association between FTP and academic success, and one such example is how FTP is related to delay of gratification. Klineberg (1968), for example, found that individuals with a long FTP were able to delay gratification more often than individuals with a short FTP. In a similar manner, Husman and Lens (1999) theorized that the reason individuals with a long FTP had been more susceptible to delaying gratification in their research was because long-term goals seem much closer to them than do long-term goals for individuals with a short FTP. Since delay of gratification has often been correlated with academic success (Bembenutty, 2002; Bembenutty & Karabenick, 2004; de Volder & Lens, 1982), understanding a college student's FTP can help researchers better establish its position in delay of gratification.

FTP scores have also been found to be correlated with demographic characteristics. Gjesme (1979) found in his research that sex (e.g., male, female) was correlated with future time orientation (which, in the case of this study, is synonymous with FTP). In another example of demographic differences, Lang and Carstensen (2002) found that older people had smaller FTP scores than younger ones. Since FTP scores are important for analyzing success, correlations

between demographic characteristics and FTP scores can also be helpful in describing how the construct interacts with different groups of people; a certain FTP score can indicate a likelihood of academic success, and demographic characteristics may predict a likely FTP score.

Significance and Research Objectives

Few studies have investigated how FTP scores are related to college students' goals and how the demographic characteristics unique to college students (e.g., first-generation status, classification) may explain differences in their FTP scores, among other demographic characteristics (e.g., race, sex). Therefore, the purpose of the present study is as follows:

1. Describe the FTP of college students based on demographic characteristics.

2. Describe the professional and academic goals that college students possess.

Research questions include the following:

1. Are there differences in FTP score by demographic variables (i.e., race, sex, and first-generation status)?

2. Are FTP scores different between first-year and fourth-year classifications?

3. Is a goal type (i.e., personal, social, academic, or professional) more likely to be short term or long term?

4. What are the most important academic and professional goals of participants?

My hypotheses are that there will be significant differences in FTP scores by demographic variables, scores will not be significantly different among first-year and fourth-year students, and that more professional goals will be short-term for seniors than for freshmen, while more academic goals will be long-term for freshmen than for seniors.

CHAPTER II

METHODS

Participants

Participants in this study were undergraduate students enrolled at Texas A&M University who were either classified as freshman or senior students according to the university. A first-year student is a student who has completed less than the equivalent of 1 full year of undergraduate work; that is, less than 30 semester hours (in a 120-hour degree program). A fourth-year student is a student who has completed the equivalent of 3 full years of undergraduate work; that is, 90 semester hours (in a 120-hour degree program). "First-year" and "freshman" are used interchangeably, as well as "fourth-year" and "senior". A total of $N = 488$ responses were recorded. There were $n = 413$ seniors and $n = 175$ freshmen.

Materials

After Institutional Review Board approval for the study, student classification was obtained by Texas A&M University's Division of Information Technology Bulk Email Request System, which already had potential participants classified as undergraduate first-year or fourth-year students based on completed credit hours. The instrument developed by the researcher included three components. The first component asked for demographic information, including age, sex (male, female, or intersex), first-generation college student status, and race as defined by Texas A&M University. The second component consisted of open-ended questions asking for the participants' most important professional, academic, personal, and social goals. For each goal, the participants indicated if the estimated time it would take to complete the goal would be either less than 12 months or 12 months or more. The time distinction was due to the a consensus

found among universities and companies that has suggested that a short-term goal is a goal that can be completed in less than a year and a long-term goal requires a year or more for completion (Long-term and short-term goals, 2018; Short-term vs. long-term goals, 2018; Types of goals, n.d.)The final component of the instrument, the Future Time Perspective Scale (FTPS), was used to gather information on each student's FTP. The FTPS was developed by Husman and Shell in 2008 and was published in the journal *Learning and Individual Differences*. It includes 27 Likert items categorized into four Likert subscales constituting FTP (speed, extension, value, and connectedness). Speed measures how fast a person thinks time is passing. Extension measures how far ahead in time a person's thoughts lie. Value measures the magnitude of importance a person places on the future. Connectedness measures how closely a person links present actions to future consequences.

Reliability and validity of the FTPS were established by Husman and Shell (2008). They reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients to be 0.72 for the valence subscale, 0.82 for the connectedness subscale, 0.72 for the speed subscale, and 0.74 for the speed subscale.

Although there are researchers who argue that FTP is a unidimensional construct, there were two reasons the FTPS was chosen. First, despite the different jargon among researchers for describing FTP subscales, there are several similarities in the dimensions. Coherence is defined as the organization of the future in a person's mind (Daltrey & Langer, 1984); likewise, connectedness is the understanding of how actions in the present associate with events of the future (Husman & Shell, 2008). Directionality and speed are both a measure of the pace that time passes by an individual (Daltrey & Langer, 1984; Husman & Shell, 2008). Attitude/affectivity measures a person's thoughts about the future, and density is a measure of the number of goals in a unit of time (Daltrey & Langer, 1984), meanwhile valence describes the value given to the

future by an individual (Husman & Shell, 2008), which can be reflected by attitude and density. Due to these similarities, it is easier to justify that studying one multidimensional construct of FTP will provide similar conclusions on other multidimensional models bearing such beliefs.

Second, despite the high correlations of the subscales in the Daltrey Future Time Perspective Test (Daltrey & Langer, 2008), which argued for a unidimensional construct of FTP, the fact that researchers have been unable to replicate the results of the test according to Husman and Shell (2008) provides an incentive for measuring FTP first through an acceptable multidimensional construct. The FTPS by Husman and Shell (2008) combines a questionnaire they developed for FTP (Shell & Husman, 2001) with another questionnaire for FTP by Gjesme (1979) that the researchers indicate contained good Cronbach's alpha coefficients. A replication of this new, combined scale in another study could help justify why a multidimensional construct of FTP continues to be helpful in understanding the views that students have of the future.

Procedure

Emails were sent to two groups through the TAMU Division of Information Technology Bulk Email Request System. Group 1 was for students with the undergraduate first-year designation. Group 2 was for students with the undergraduate fourth-year designation. Students received a pre-notice email informing them of the study and its importance. Another email contained a link to the instrument in *Qualtrics*. We followed up on contacts following Dillman's Tailored Design Method (Dillman, 2007). The data was analyzed beginning in October to address each research question. The data was run pairwise for analysis. Thus, although there were $N = 588$ responses, missing data resulted in lower numbers for each classification for certain analyses, which are indicated below. The procedure to answer each question is indicated below.

Research Question 1: Are there differences in FTP score by demographic variables?

T-tests were run to compare FTP subscale scores by the following first-generation status (first generation, $n = 99$, or not first generation, $n = 458$), and sex (male, $n = 198$, or female, $n = 357$), A T-test was able to be run for sex because no participants identified as intersex.

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if FTP subscale scores were different for groups with different races. Participants were classified into six groups, according to the categories by Texas A&M University's enrollment profile: "White only" ($n = 367$ for speed, extension, and connectedness subscales, and $n = 366$ for value subscale), "Black only + 2 or more / 1 Black" ($n = 19$ for all subscales), "Hispanic or Latino of any Race" ($n = 120$ for extension, value, and connectedness subscales, and $n = 121$ for speed subscale), "Native Hawaiian Only" ($n = 0$ for all subscales), "2 or more excluding Black /Hispanic" ($n = 21$ for all subscales), and "International" ($n = 2$ for all subscales). The "Unknown or Not Reported Category" was not tested.

Research Question 2: Are FTP scores different between first-year and fourth-year classifications?

A t-test was run to compare FTP subscale scores by classification (senior, $n = 390$, or freshman, $n = 167$).

Research Question 3: Is a goal more likely to be short term or long term?

Descriptive statistics were run for the expected completion time of goals for freshmen ($n = 175$) and seniors ($n = 413$).

Research Question 4: What are the most important academic and professional goals of participants?

A basic, qualitative approach (Merriam, 2009) employing content analysis was used to address this research question. Patton (2002) noted, "content analysis, then, involves identifying, coding, categorizing, classifying, and labeling the primary patters in the data" (p. 463). Data from the section of the instrument that asked participants to identify their most important academic and professional goals was coded using first cycle and second cycle coding methods (Saldaña, 2009). The responses of participants to each goal area was coded using open coding during first cycle coding (Saldaña, 2009). After open coding, codes were closely examined during a peer debriefing and compared for similarities such that sub-categories were identified, and axial codes were assigned during second cycle coding (Saldaña, 2009). The axial codes emerged as the major themes found within the participants' goals.

There are two common methods of interpreting content analysis data (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). One is the use of codes and themes to help organize the content and arrive at a narrative which describes the findings. The other is the use of frequencies and the percentage and/or proportion of particular occurrences as compared to total occurrences. This study utilized both methods. Representative quotes from participants are included in the findings as are frequencies and percentages found within each of the themes.

Peer-debriefings were used to increase credibility within the study (Merriam, 2009). An audit trail was maintained and kept with each coded response to increase dependability and confirmability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Are there differences in FTP score by demographic variables?

No significant difference was found in the means of the different subscales when comparing students who were or were not first-generation college students (Table 1).

Table 1

FTP Subscales by First-Generation Status

	First-Generation?				t	Sig.
	Yes ($n = 99$)		No ($n = 458$)			
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation		
Speed	3.94	1.55	3.93	1.42	.079	.939
Extension	4.01	.60	4.03	.64	-.231	.817
Value	3.64	.74	3.52	.75	1.35	.177
Connectedness	4.27	.48	4.36	.43	-1.86	.063

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if FTP subscale scores were significantly different according to race (Table 2). As part of the requirement for using the results for ANOVA, Levene's test for equality of variances was conducted. According to Levene's test, there was homogeneity of variances based on mean for the speed subscale ($p = .122$), extension subscale ($p = .192$), and value subscale ($p = .661$). The assumption of homogeneity of variances was violated for the connectedness subscale ($p = .034$).

Table 2

One-Way Analysis of Variance of FTP Subscale Scores by Race

	Source	df	SS	MS	F	p
Speed	Between groups	5	23.310	4.662	2.272	.046
	Within groups	553	1134.653	2.052		
	Total	558	1157.963			
Extension	Between groups	5	3.049	0.610	1.529	.179
	Within groups	552	220.249	0.399		
	Total	557	223.299			
Value	Between groups	5	.823	0.165	0.284	.922
	Within groups	551	319.242	0.579		
	Total	556	320.065			
Connectedness	Between groups	5	4.507	0.901	4.888	.000
	Within groups	551	102.607	0.186		
	Total	556	107.158			

A Tukey post hoc test was conducted for the subscales that did not violate homogeneity of variances. The means for the speed subscale between the White Only group ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 1.41$, $n = 366$) and Hispanic or Latino of any Race group ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 1.44$, $n = 120$) approached a statistically significant difference ($p = .056$) (Table 3). The means for the connectedness subscale between the White Only group ($M = 4.39$, $SD = 0.41$) and the Hispanic or Latino of any Race group ($M = 4.57$, $SD = 0.33$) had significant difference ($p = .000$), as did the means of the Black Only + 2 or more / 1 Black group and Hispanic or Latino of any Race group ($p = .007$) for this subscale; however, the Black Only + 2 or more / 1 Black result should be interpreted with caution since there were less than 30 participants ($n = 19$).

Table 3

FTP Subscales by Race

	Subscales							
	Speed		Extension		Value		Connectedness	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
White Only (*n* = 366)	4.00	1.41	4.02	0.64	3.55	0.74	4.39	0.41
Black Only + 2 or more / 1 Black (*n* = 19)	4.40	1.24	4.03	0.39	3.44	0.93	4.57	0.33
Hispanic or Latino of any Race (*n*= 120)	3.57	1.44	3.95	0.64	3.53	0.76	4.20	0.47
Asian Only (*n* = 29)	4.17	1.63	4.19	0.58	3.53	0.76	4.30	0.54
International (*n* = 2)	3.83	3.54	4.50	0.99	3.64	1.11	4.67	0.12
2 or more excluding Black /Hispanic (*n* = 21)	4.05	1.42	4.26	0.61	3.71	0.92	4.32	0.46

Note. No participants identified as Native Hawaiian.

The extension (p = .00) and value (p = .00) subscales had significant differences between males and females (Table 4). Males had a greater mean value for both extension (M = 4.12, n = 198) and value (M = 3.38, n = 198) than females (M = 3.95, n = 357 and M = 3.63, n = 357 respectively).

Table 4

FTP Subscales by Sex

	Sex				t	Sig.
	Male (*n* = 198)		Female (*n* = 357)			
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*		
Speed	3.96	1.42	3.91	1.45	0.34	.73
Extension	4.12	0.60	3.95	0.64	3.64	.00
Value	3.38	0.72	3.63	0.76	-3.76	.00
Connectedness	4.31	0.45	4.37	0.43	-1.36	.18

Are FTP scores different between first-year and fourth-year classifications?

There was a significant difference (*p* = 0.01) in FTP scores between freshmen and seniors in the value subscale (Table 5). Seniors had a statistically significant greater mean FTP score **(***M* = 3.60) for this subscale than did freshmen (*M* = 3.42).

Table 5

FTP Subscales by Classification

	Classification				t	Sig.
	Senior (*n* = 390)		Freshman (*n* = 167)			
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*		
Speed	3.90	1.51	4.00	1.26	0.81	.42
Extension	4.02	0.65	4.04	0.60	0.27	.79
Value	3.60	0.76	3.42	0.74	-2.64	.01
Connectedness	4.35	0.43	4.34	0.47	-0.28	.78

Is a goal type more likely to be short term or long term?

More than three-fourths of all seniors (75.5%, *n* = 413) placed professional goals in the long-term (12 months or more) as opposed to the short-term (Table 6). More than nine-tenths of freshmen placed professional goals in the long-term (95.4%, *n* = 175).

Table 6

Expected Completion Time of Professional Goals by Classification

	Classification			
	Senior		Freshman	
	f	% within Classification	f	% within Classification
Less than 12 months	101	24.5	8	4.6
12 months or more	312	75.5	167	95.4
Total	413	100.0	175	100.0

More than half of all seniors (59%, $n = 412$) expected to complete their academic goals in less than 12 months (Table 7). On the other hand, almost three-fourths freshmen (74.9%, $n = 175$) expected their academic goals to be completed in 12 months or more.

Table 7

Expected Completion Time of Academic Goals by Classification

	Classification			
	Senior		Freshman	
	f	% within Classification	f	% within Classification
Less than 12 months	243	59.0	44	25.1
12 months or more	169	41.0	131	74.9
Total	412	100.0	175	100.0

The expected completion time of personal goals was another difference between freshmen and seniors (Table 8). More than half of all seniors expected their personal goals to be long-term tasks (59.8%), meanwhile more than half of all freshmen expected their personal goals to be long-term (52.6%). The difference for seniors was 19.6%, close to the difference found when observing academic goals. The percentage difference for freshmen was 5.2%, which was

the smallest difference found for any results for freshmen framing goals in either the short term or long term.

Table 8

Expected Completion Time of Personal Goals by Classification

	Classification			
	Senior		Freshman	
	f	% within Classification	*f*	% within Classification
Less than 12 months	163	40.2	92	52.6
12 months or more	242	59.8	83	47.4
Total	405	100	175	100

For social goals, the majority of both groups framed them in the short term (Table 9). The percentage difference between seniors was 2.2%, meanwhile the difference between freshmen was 33.4%.

Table 9

Expected Completion Time of Social Goals by Classification

	Classification			
	Senior		Freshman	
	f	% within Classification	*f*	% within Classification
Less than 12 months	202	51.1	116	66.7
12 months or more	193	48.9	58	33.3
Total	395	100.0	174	100.0

What are the most important academic and professional goals of participants?

Content analysis of the professional goals identified by participants revealed four themes that emerged: Outside Employment, Career, Continued Education, and Self-Employment.

Outside Employment

The Outside Employment theme included the group of responses where respondents specifically wanted a "job", "work", or an "internship" or "co-op". This included references to a specific company, a job with specific features, or simply a job. Responses that discussed starting one's own business were excluded. Examples include the following:

- Getting a job. (205)

- A job where I can help other co-works/clients and make a decent amount of money. (186)

- A job with the Ag House Committee, USDA, TDA or something pertaining to Ag policy. (241)

- I wish to work for NASA, specifically landing site preparations for future Mars Astronauts. (398)

- I want to get my first job/internship in aerospace engineering. (285)

- I am attempting to get a professional internship at Walt Disney World Resort. (273)

272 of the 588 participants (46.3%) demonstrated the Outside Employment theme in their responses, where the plurality of both classifications had responses within this theme.

Career

The Career theme the group of responses where respondents specifically wanted a "career". This includes a field-specific career, a career with a certain company, or simply a career. Examples include the following:

- To have a good career that pays well and I enjoy. (562)

- Pursuing a career in a museum-related field (184)

- I am pursuing a career in Landscape Architecture at a landscape firm. (371)

- I have no idea what I want to do for a permanent career, so the current goal is to figure that out. To find a career path that I can follow. (578)

- Currently, I am pursuing a career in user experience and design. I have accepted a return offer for full-time employment in software development and integration, but long-term I wish to go into design. (349)

157 of the 588 participants (26.7%) demonstrated the Career theme in their responses.

Continued Education

The Continued Education theme included the group of responses where respondents wanted to go to either graduate school or professional, or who wanted to get a degree from that institution. It also included responses that indicated obtaining a professional license or certificate. Examples of some responses by participants include the following:

- Earn a Master's degree after I graduate from A&M. (350)

- Attending graduate school. (569)

- Medical school; hematology/oncology. (293)

- Veterinary school, DVM. (474)

112 of the 588 participants (19%) demonstrated the Continued Education theme in their responses.

Self-Employment

The Self-Employment theme included responses whose focus was on establishing one's own business. Examples include the following:

- Creating a farm-based medical chain of medical practices. (259)
- To start a nonprofit. (319)

- I would like to build a business that is recognized as part of the Aggie 100 within the next 10 years. (530)

- Start my own company dealing efficiency and production of fourth gen nuclear reactors. (165)

31 of the 588 participants (5.3%) demonstrated the Self-Employment theme in their responses.

Three themes emerged from the content analysis of the academic goals identified by participants: Academics, College Completion, and Continued Education.

Academics

The Academics theme included the group of responses that emphasized graduation with honors or having a certain GPA, whether quantified or simply described as "good".

- I am pursuing a 4.0 GPA for the fall and spring semesters of 1 year. (275)

- Graduate with honors in May 2019. (317)

- I wish to have the best GPA I can possibly achieve knowing my own limitiations and my determination. (287)

- Trying to graduate in less than 5 years with at least a 3.5 GPA (27)

290 of the 586 responses (49.5%) demonstrated the Academics theme.

College Completion

The College Completion theme included the group of responses where respondents wanted to complete their undergraduate years or to get an undergraduate degree, excluding responses that emphasized graduation with honors. Such responses coming from the question concerning academic goals include the following:

- Graduating with a Computer Engineering Degree. (301)

- I intend to graduate with a Bachelor's of Science in computer science. (92)

- Graduating with a Degree in MMET and a Minor in Business. (339)

- A degree in Human Resource Development. Hopefully to one day be an HR manager. (169)

- Honestly, I'm just trying to get my degree. (10)

235 of the 586 responses (40.0%) demonstrated the College Completion theme.

Continued Education

As was the case for the professional goal responses, the Continued Education theme included the group of responses where respondents wanted to go to either graduate school or professional, or who wanted to get a degree from that institution. It also included responses that indicated obtaining a professional license or certificate. Examples of some responses for the academic goal question include the following:

- I want to obtain my PhD in Behavioral Neuroscience or Molecular Biology. (213)

- Master's Degree, possibly with a teaching certificate (351)

- Achieving a doctorate. (165)

- I want to get my Master's degree in Biomedical Engineering in five years, and perhaps pursue further education in medicine eventually. (102)

190 of the 586 responses (32.4%) demonstrated the Continued Education theme.

Although the Continued Education theme was not significantly present in the question asking for a participant's most important professional goal, there were more responses and a greater percentage of freshmen who considered completing an undergraduate degree as a professional goal than did seniors. 23 of 175 freshmen (13%) considered obtaining an

undergraduate degree as a professional goal, meanwhile 20 of 413 seniors (4.8%) considered it a professional goal.

Senior responses were more evenly distributed among the three themes for the academic question than freshmen. Of the 411 senior responses, 181 (44.0%) fit under the College Completion theme, 175 (42.3%) fit under the Academics theme, and 145 (35.3%) fit under the Continued Education theme. Of the 175 freshmen responses, 115 (65.7%) fit under the Academics theme, 54 (30.9%) fit under the College Completion theme, and 45 (25.7%) fit under the Continued Education theme.

The above examples of responses that would be in a certain theme were used because they included either one or two sentences whose focus were readily visible. However, many responses to the questions asking for the most important academic and professional goal included several themes (Table 10). Another observation was that some responses were more detailed than others, either by naming a specific field, a deadline, or some other qualifier to the answer.

Table 10

Examples of Responses with Varying Themes and Detail

Question	Response	Theme(s) and Details
Write the most important <u>professional</u> goal you are pursuing. Please be clear and specific.	Graduating. (552)	• College Completion
Write the most important <u>professional</u> goal you are pursuing. Please be clear and specific.	Currently, I would like to finish off college, graduate with my public health degree and go into management consulting. After 2 years I will be pursuing an MBA at a top 20 school. (494)	• College Completion • Continued Education (Field Specific, Time Specific)
Write the most important <u>academic</u> goal you are pursuing. Please be clear and specific.	To achieve a high GPA; graduate with a BS in Biology; Matriculate into Medical School. (293)	• Academics • College Completion (Field Specific) • Continued Education

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Are there differences in FTP score by demographic variables?

In the present study, significant differences were found in FTP based on sex. Therefore, the results of this study support previous findings from other studies that found differences in FTP scores among males and females (Gjesme, 1979). This current study found that males consider events farther into the future (extension) and place higher importance on these events (value) than females.

Another demographic variable where a significant difference was found was race. The mean difference for the speed subscale between the White Only group and Hispanic or Latino of any Race group approached a statistically significant difference. Since the mean for the White Only Group was larger, the results would indicate that members of the White Only group perceive time to pass by faster than members of the Hispanic or Latino of any Race group. Additionally, the mean difference for the connectedness subscale between the White Only group and the Hispanic or Latino of any Race group reached significance. Since the mean of the Hispanic or Latino of any Race group was higher, this result would indicate that members of the Hispanic or Latino of any Race group link past actions to future consequences more closely than members of the White Only group.

No significant difference in FTP by first-generation status.

Are FTP scores different across first-year and fourth-year classifications?

The results indicated that seniors placed higher value in the future than freshmen. This is not surprising given that freshmen have a more time to figure out what their future holds while

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seniors are much closer to making important life decisions, thus placing a higher value on their future.

Is a goal type more likely to be short term or long term?

For some goals, classification did not appear to predict what the expected time frame for their completion would be. Specifically, professional goals were long-term for most members of each classification. In this study, about three in every four seniors placed their professional goals in the long-term, meanwhile about 19 in every 20 freshmen placed professional goals in the long term. For other goals, classification did appear to be provide predictive power on expected completion time. In this case, about three in every four freshmen had an academic goal in the long-term, whereas 2 out of three seniors had an academic goal in the short-term.

It is perhaps surprising that most seniors (three for every four) placed their professional goals in the long-term despite, in many cases graduating in a few months. Although it is uncertain why this was the case, this result may be due to professional goals including employment opportunities that require prerequisites that take time, such as experience within a field or a year or more in an internship before taking a full position at a company.

Another surprising result was that about one in three seniors expected to complete their academic goals in the long-term. This may be due perceiving continued education, such as professional school, as an academic goal.

What are the most important academic and professional goals of participants?

Overall, it seemed that freshmen had less of a distinction between professional and academic goals concerning graduating or obtaining an undergraduate degree than did seniors. In other words, where most members of both classifications considered obtaining a bachelor's

degree to be an academic goal, there were twice the proportion of freshmen who considered it a professional goal than there were seniors.

For both classifications, obtaining a job was the most important professional goal. Maintaining a certain GPA was the most important academic goal for freshmen, meanwhile this was about tied with completing college for seniors. The difference between freshmen and seniors in the importance they placed on graduating may be due to the fact that seniors are closer to graduating, so more seniors who would not have thought about graduation a few years prior are now thinking about it because it is in within the time frame that they consider (or, in terms of FTP, within their extension).

Among both freshmen and seniors, some students view their future goals in detailed, step-by-step methods, meanwhile others have the final goal in mind (which may itself be vague). Further studies could be conducted to see if the detail in which a student outlines a goal can be indicative of what FTP subscale scores they have.

Further implications from this research are that, when a mentor is helping a student set a goal, the mentor should be mindful of differences in FTP that may exist between different mentees. For example, a mentor could expect more males to be thinking farther ahead into the future and with a more positive attitude then females. Likewise, a white mentee may not be able to see how his or her actions are affecting his or her future as readily as a Hispanic or Latino mentee may see. Adapting to these differences may help mentors better serve mentees.

Another area for future research could be to study the FTP of students in different colleges. Although there were no significant differences based on classification, this does not rule out differences based on students from different colleges. Since a mentor often deals with

students of varying majors, it could be useful to determine if students of one college have a

distinct perception about the future when compared to students of another college.

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APPENDIX

Embedded Data:
- First-year student: A student who has completed less than the equivalent of 1 full year of undergraduate work; that is, less than 30 semester hours (in a 120-hour degree program) or less than 900 contact hours.
- Fourth-year student: A student who has completed the equivalent of 3 full years of undergraduate work; that is, 90 semester hours (in a 120-hour degree program).

Demographic Questions

What is your age? (i.e., 21)

What is your sex?
- Male
- Female
- Intersex

Are you the first in your immediate family to attend college?
- Yes
- No

Indicate which race from the options below best describes you.
- White Only
- Black Only + 2 or more / 1 Black
- Hispanic or Latino of any Race
- Asian Only
- American Indian Only
- International
- Native Hawaiian Only
- 2 or more excluding Black/ Hispanic

Articulation of Goals Questions

Write the most important <u>professional</u> goal you are pursuing. Please be clear and specific.

_____
_____
_____

Select whether the estimated time you believe it will take to achieve this goal.
- Less than 12 months
- 12 months or more

Write the most important <u>academic</u> goal you are pursuing. Please be clear and specific.

_____
_____
_____
_____

Select whether the estimated time you believe it will take to achieve this goal.
- Less than 12 months
- 12 months or more

Write the most important <u>personal</u> goal you are pursuing. Please be clear and specific.
_____
_____
_____

Select whether the estimated time you believe it will take to achieve this goal.
- Less than 12 months
- 12 months or more

Write the most important <u>social</u> goal you are pursuing. Please be clear and specific.
_____
_____
_____

Select whether the estimated time you believe it will take to achieve this goal.
- Less than 12 months
- 12 months or more

Future Time Perspective Scale
(Used with permission from Jenefer Husman and Duane F. Shell)

For each of the questions below, circle the response that best characterizes how you feel about the statement, where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree Nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I find it hard to get things done without a deadline.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I need to feel rushed before I can really get going.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I always seem to be doing things at the last moment.	1	2	3	4	5

4. February seems like a long way off.	1	2	3	4	5
5. It often seems like the semester will never end.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Half a year seems like a long time to me.	1	2	3	4	5
7. In general, six months seems like a very short period of time.	1	2	3	4	5
8. March seems very near.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Given the choice, it is better to get something you want in the future than something you want today.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Immediate pleasure is more important than what might happen in the future.	1	2	3	4	5
11. It is better to be considered a success at the end of one's life than to be considered a success today.	1	2	3	4	5
12. The most important thing in life is how one feels in the long run.	1	2	3	4	5
13. It is more important to save for the future than to buy what one wants today.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Long range goals are more important than short range goals.	1	2	3	4	5

15. What happens in the long run is more important than how one feels right now.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I don't think much about the future.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I have been thinking a lot about what I am going to do in the future.	1	2	3	4	5
18. It's really no use worrying about the future.	1	2	3	4	5
19. What one does today will have little impact on what happens ten years from now.	1	2	3	4	5
20. What will happen in the future is an important consideration in deciding what action to take now.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I don't like to plan for the future.	1	2	3	4	5
22. It's not really important to have future goals for where one wants to be in five or ten years.	1	2	3	4	5
23. One shouldn't think too much about the future.	1	2	3	4	5
24. Planning for the future is a waste of time.	1	2	3	4	5
25. It is important to have goals for where one wants to be in five or ten years.	1	2	3	4	5

26. One should be taking steps today to help realize future goals.	1	2	3	4	5
27. What might happen in the long run should not be a big consideration in making decisions now.	1	2	3	4	5

Subscales being measure in each question: Speed = Q1-Q3; Extension = Q4-Q8; Value = Q9-Q15; Connectedness = Q16-Q27.

Item order was randomized.